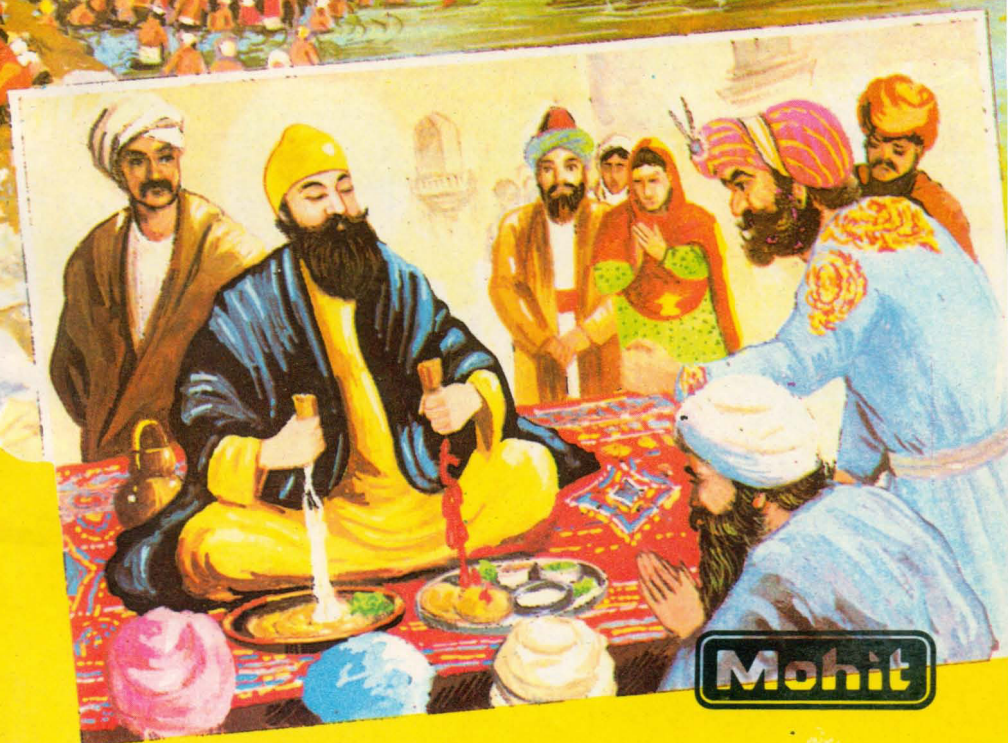
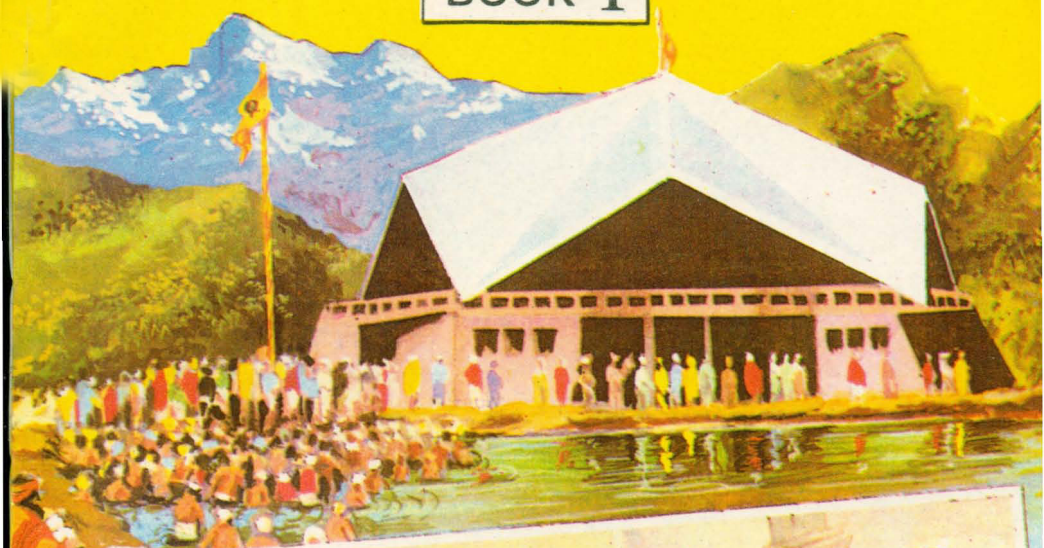


# Tales From **SIKH HISTORY**

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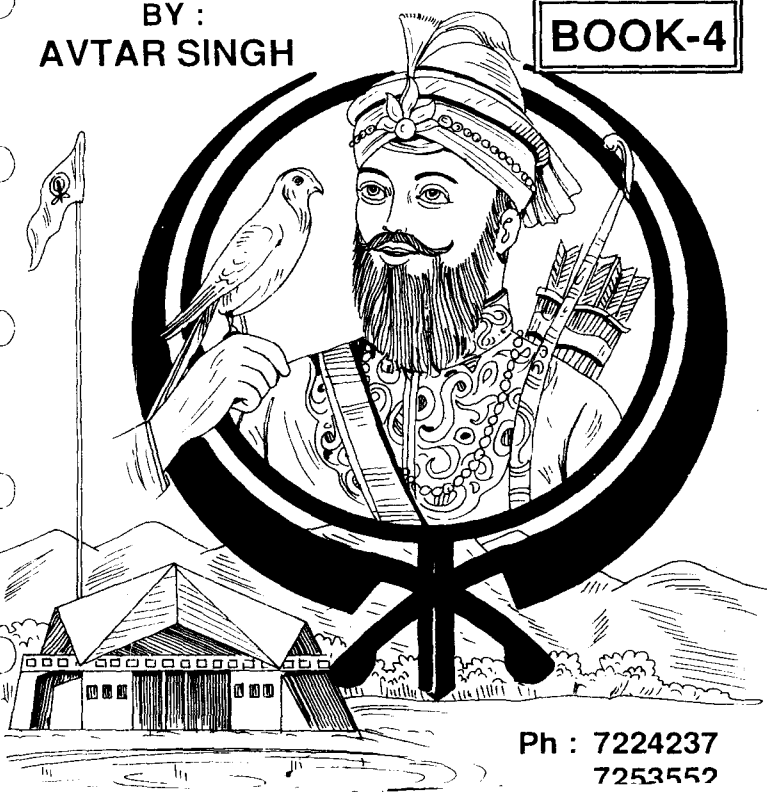


**Mohit**

# TALES FROM SIKH HISTORY

BY :  
AVTAR SINGH

BOOK-4



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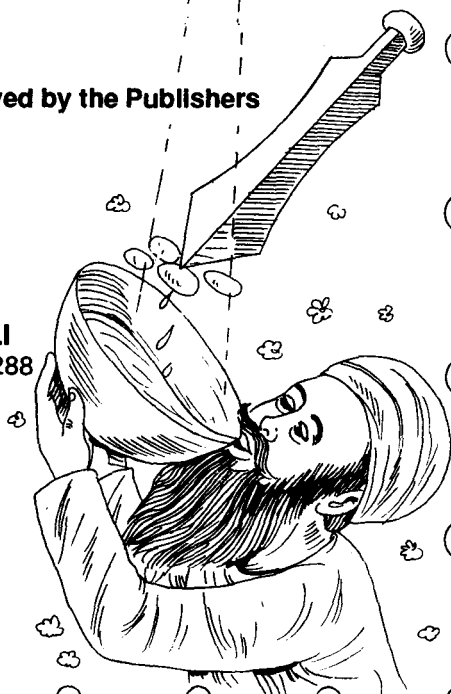
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# FORE WORD

In our daily prayers we gratefully remember Guru Gobind Singh Jee as the supreme donor who sacrificed the whole of his family for the cause of truth, the love of God, the nation and the country, waging his war against the forces of injustice and intolerance. His fight was not against any faith or any individual person. To him the Hindus or the Turks were from the same stock, the human race. Their modes of worship Puja or Namaz were to him only the indicatives manifesting their faith in the supreme power, the God, thus neither of them was inferior to the other. He wielded sword to uphold the righteousness and destroy the evil and that too as a last resort when all other means to redress grievances having failed. He was highly revered greatman respected by the Hindus and the Muslims alike. Many Muslim saints of repute and even socially high ups Muslim personalities of the time held him in great esteem and considered him the holiest of the holy saints performing the God's mission on earth.

Literally he was the most dynamic and sublime personality of the history of India who within the short life span of only 42 years accomplished remarkably in different spheres i.e. social, religious, literary and moral.

He made the social life of the people healthier by relieving it of the evils of caste prejudices and the inequalities prevalent among the four Castes by merging them into the single Caste, the Khalsa where every member enjoyed equal status and equal privileges.

He pruned the religion of all the superfluous forms of worship and enjoined upon his Sikhs to worship only the timeless God. The greatest service he did for the Khalsa Panth was to install the Granth Sahib as the spiritual head of the Panth in perpetuity, thereby safeguarded the purity and the sanctity of the true religion against falling into undeserving hands.

To uplift his people both morally and intellectually the Guru got translated the entire ancient Sanskrit literature into the spoken language of the people. Himself being a poet par-excellent and gifted, his poetic compositions in Hindi, Persian and Punjabi are virtually unsurpassed till this date.

He infused new courage into the terror stricken minds of the ordinary people who when transformed into his Khalsas could dare challenging the mightiest, themselves remaining invincible as long as they had the life in them. The creation of the Khalsa was an epoch making event revolutionary in its characteristics and bringing in the terrain the sounds of death knell for the Mughal power and an aspiration for the establishment of the rule based on justice and tolerance and free from religious dogmatism.

The supreme souls like of Guru Gobind Singh jee appeared once after ages to relieve the sufferings of humanity. The Indian nation indeed owes a debt of gratitude to him for the miraculous deeds he did for the welfare of the people

AVTAR SINGH

# 1. Birth at Patna

Guru Gobind Singh himself gives an account of his birth in a long poetic epic called Bachitra Natak. He relates, "I practised hard penance on Hemkunt, the mountain which has seven peaks to adorn it. My mind was fixed on the lotus feet of God Almighty. I had attained through meditation those spiritual heights where I found myself one with God. This state of my mind was so satisfying that I wished I could keep clinging to the feet of God for ever. The supreme Being was pleased with my devotional meditation. I was taken to Him (Sach Khand) He blessed me with the honour of being His own son. He commanded me to go to the world and propogate His faith. The mission he set for me was to uphold righteousness and destory unrighteousness, to uproot evil and establish good. I was to protect the saint, the holy, the weak and the innocent. I was to destroy the oppressor, the cruel the evil doer and the killer of people. I was to prevent people from committing sinful acts.

I was unwilling to part from the serene company, but the Supreme Being advised me to obey the command. He assured me that He will be by my side and that I shall be carrying on, his noble mission on earth. I yielded before the will of the lord and came to the world (MatLok). My father was on his pilgrimage visiting holy places. At Triveni (Allahabad) he did many acts of charity. Then he proceeded onwards to Patna. It was at Patna that I took my birth."

You have already read in the previous book that Guru Teg Bahadur left Anandpur along with his family and a good number of Sikhs to preach the doctrines of his faith in the north eastern parts of the country. He was on a preaching mission visiting places of pilgrimage on his way to Bengal and Assam.

Mata Gujri Ji was on her family way, so she along with her brother Kirpal and the ladies of Guru's household, were made to stay at Patna. Guru Teg Bahadur halted for a few days at Patna. He made arrangements for the residence of the family. A big pucca house (haveli) in Koocha Farooq Khan became the home of the Guru's family. On the one side of the house



Gurdwara Hemkunt Sahib

was a temple and on its otherside there was a mosque. The path leading to the mosque ran through the compound of the haveli and one of the doors of the temple opened into the haveli. Besides the divine Kirtan of Gurbani, the Guru's family could hear the 'Azan' from the mosque and the tinklings of bells from the temple. There in that haveli and such a surroundings Mata Gujri Ji gave birth to Guru Gobind Singh on December 26, 1666, four hours before dawn.

After making arrangements for the stay of the family at Patna, Guru Teg Bahadur had resumed his onwards journey to Bengal and Assam. He was in Assam when Guru Gobind Singh was born. The news of the birth of son reached him at Guru Ki Dhubri (Assam) where he had been camping.

Patna is a blessed city. Long ago It had received the message of love and peace from Lord Budha, the apostle of peace. Again here appeared the greatest saviour, the greatest poet, the par excellence innovator, and the greatest benefactor all in one in the person of Guru Gobind Singh, who had in him the humility of Guru Nanak, the kindness of Christ, the vehemence of Mohammad Sahib the sun kissed glroy of lord Krishna, the propriety of Lord Rama and the splendour of kings.

## **2. Faqir Bhikhan Shah And the Child Gobind Rai**

Bhikhan Shah was a Muslim saint of repute. He was born in the village of 'Ghuraam (Patiala) but later on shifted to Thaska (Haryana). He had a large following and a good number of his disciples always kept his company.

Like a true Muslim he was very particular in offering five prayers a day on fixed hours. The Hindus worship the rising sun and they believe East symbolizing hope and progress. Quite contrary to it the Muslim bow their heads towards the West. They say their prayers keeping their face towards the West. One day Bhikhan Shah said his morning prayers bowing his head to the East. It was an unusual action and amounted to an offence, an affront to their religious belief in the eyes of his disciples. They asked him to explain to them the mystery behind his such a strange behaviour. Bhikhan Shah said to them, "In my prayers to day, I felt the emergence of Divine light in the East. I beheld as if the Noor of Allah (God's sparkling light) were descending on earth. I had, thus, paid my obeisance to the Noor of Allah by bowing my head to the East."

As Bhikhan Shah was keen to have the sight of that light of Allah. So along with his disciples, he set out towards the East and reached Patna. A strange light kept guiding him on the way and finally it led him to the door of the house, where child Godbind Rai had been living. He kissed the door of the house, bowed his head and sat down near the door.

The Guru's family came to know that a Faqir had been sitting near the door of the house. A member of the household came to him and asked him, "What do you want? Why are you sitting here in such a way"?

Bhikhan Shah replied, "I have covered long distances to have the holy sight of the child, who to me is the light of Allah. The purpose of my journey from the far off Punjab to Patna is to behold the Divine light. Bring the child Gobind Rai to me so that I may touch his holy feet."





Bheekhan Shah placed two pots before the child, Gobind Rai

So keen was the desire of Bhikhan Shah that the Guru's family could not but honoured his wish. One of the maids brought out the child. Bhikhan Shah was glad to have the sight of the child. He touched the child's feet. He made a deep, respectful bow. He felt a strange peaceful feeling in him. He was certain that the child Gobind Rai, was the Divine incarnation.

An idea struck his mind to test if that Divine incarnation would uphold the Muslim faith or the Hindu faith. He had two small earthen pots. He filled one with milk and the other with water. He placed both the pots before the child. Gobind Rai covered one of the pots with his right hand and the other with the left hand. He, then, looked at the Faqir and smiled. Bhikhan Shah also smiled and made a deeper and longer bow to the child. The child then lifted his hands from the pots and with the movements of his legs overturned both the pots, thus milk and water got mixed. The child again smiled at the Pir. Bhikhan Shah then prostrated himself at the child's feet.

The disciples of the Pir were confused. They failed to comprehend what the Pir meant by his all those mysterious actions. They asked him to unfold the mysteries. Bhikhan Shah explained, "I said to myself if he covers the milk pot with his hand, he will defend the Muslim faith and if he covers the water pot, he will protect the Hindu faith. As he has covered both the pots. I have assessed that he will uphold both the faiths. Since he has mixed the water and milk by overturning the two pots, I have concluded, he will treat both the faiths as the parts of larger body, the mankind. As water and milk lose their separate identity when mixed, I think he will recognise the Hindus and the Muslims as the members of human race same in all respects. I am pleased to believe that he will see no difference in temple or mosque, the Hindu way of worship or the Namaz of the Muslims."

After having the "Darshan of the Child, Gobind Rai, the Pir returned to his home in the Punjab. All through his life, he looked upon Guru Gobind Singh as God's light and remained his loving admirer.

### **3. Childhood At Patna**

Gobind Rai spent first six years of his life in Patna. It was a lively period full of fun, mirth and amusements. For his amusements, Gobind Rai played a number of games. His favourite game was to play the soldier. He had a good number of playmates at his heels. He would divide them into two groups. He placed himself at the head of one of the groups. He made another playmate to captain the other group. Then, they would engage themselves into mock fighting. He would disburse pay to his mock soldiers giving them cowries (small shells) All his playmates recognised him their leader.

Another game which amused him was the use of catapult (pallet bow). He would aim at the pots of women who went to fetch water from the well and broke their pitchers. Mata Gujri Ji had to provide women with brass vessels in exchange of their broken earthen pots. Child Gobind Rai would strike those vessels with his arrows causing holes into them. But in spite of all those acts of mischief, he was loved by the women who liked his fun and frolic considering those as the activities of Lord Krishna with the Gopies .

Gobind Rai was a charming child. His conduct and manners were admired by all sorts of people comprising both Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor, learned and simple.

Two Muslim brothers Nwab Rahim Khan and Nwab Karim Baksh were greatly impressed by the piety of Guru Teg Bahadur and they had the greatest regards for him. Now they had found the same spiritual sublimity in the child Gobind Rai. They beheld him highly adorable. They made an offering of a village and two gardens to him. These gardens are still the property of Gurdwara Harmandar Sahib Patna.

Among his Hindu admirers was a learned Brahman named Shiv Dutt, Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his wife, too, were very deeply attached to him. Pandit Shiv Dutt was a religious man, highly respected by the people of Patna. He used to meditate on the bank of Ganges very early in the morning. In the quiet hours of morning he would concentrate his mind on his 'Thaker'

(Lord). In his trance he would often see child Gobind Rai taking the seat of his lord. As the time went by, his faith in the child, Gobind Rai became more and more sound. He started looking upon Gobind Rai as the incarnation of Lord Krishna. He began to address him, "My child Lord. (Bala Pritam).

Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his wife had firm faith in Pandit Shiv Dutt. One early morning they went to the bank of river Ganges to pay their respect to the holy man. As they were issueless, they wished the holyman should pray to God for a son to them. Pandit Shiv Dutt consoled the couple telling them that a super power in the guise of a child had been moving about among them. He advised the couple, "You should pray to him. He will surely visit you by himself. He will satiate your longing for a son. He is my Bala Pritam (Child Lord). He will give you peace and happiness. Go back to your home and wait for him."

The Maini couple came back home. The Rani got prepared pancakes and gram-curry as food for the guest. She sat sown. She shut her eyes and fixed her mind on child lord, who, as assured by Pandit Shiv Dut; was to visit her.

The sun, having risen, Gobind Rai and his playmates started playing their game as usual. That day he led his group of children to Maini's residence. They began to play in the compound of the 'haveli'. While the other children were playing, Gobind Rai went into the house. He sat in the lap of the Rani, who was sitting with her eyes shut. He uttered the word, "Dear Mother! The Rani opened her eyes. The word 'mother' sounded so sweet to her ears that she was overwhelmed with joy. She opened her eyes and saw Gobind Rai sitting in her lap. She felt as if her long cherished desire for a son had been fulfilled. Gobind Rai assured the couple that they could look upon his as their son. He, then, said, "Mother! I am feeling hungry. Serve me with pancakes and gram-curry. He also called in his playmates. They all relished the food of pancakes and gram-curry

After some time the Mainies converted their palace into Maini. Sangat Gurdwara. To this day, pancakes and gram-curry are given here as 'Parshad' (Communion food).

Gobind Rai, began to spend his evenings at Maini Sangat. He would return home late at night. As Rehras (Evening prayer) was performed on his arrival to the Guru's residence, it was done quite late in the evening. This practice of performing late Rehras prayer is prevalent to this date at Harmandar Sahib Patna.

Pandit Shiv Dutt remained a loyal devotee of his 'Bala Pritam.' He visited Anandpur Sahib to meet his child lord. He had then grown very old and weak. His face lit up at the sight of young Guru Gobind Rai. He breathed his last in the lap of his child Lord. He was cremated at Anandpur. Guru Gobind Singh, himself lighted his funeral pyre

Another incident of his childhood, which is worth mentioning here, shows how hermit like disposition Gobind Rai had.

One day, he and his playmates were busy in their usual games on the bank of river, Ganges. Gobind Rai was wearing two golden bracelets on his wrists. He took off one and flung it into the river. His playmates ran to Mata Gujri Ji to tell her of the incident. She came to the bank of the river and asked Gobind Rai, "Son! Where have you thrown the bracelet"? Gobind Rai took off the second bracelet and throwing it into the river replied, "Dear mother, it was thrown there".

In 1673, Guru Teg Bahadur called back his family to Chak Nanaki (Anandpur). Thus, Gobind Rai, Mata Gujri, Mama Kirpal and other members of the Guru's family reached Anandpur. Here Gobind Rai enjoyed the bliss of the fatherly affection only for a brief period, as in 1675, Guru Teg Bahadur left Anandpur enroute to Delhi to lay down his life for the protection of Hindu Dharma.

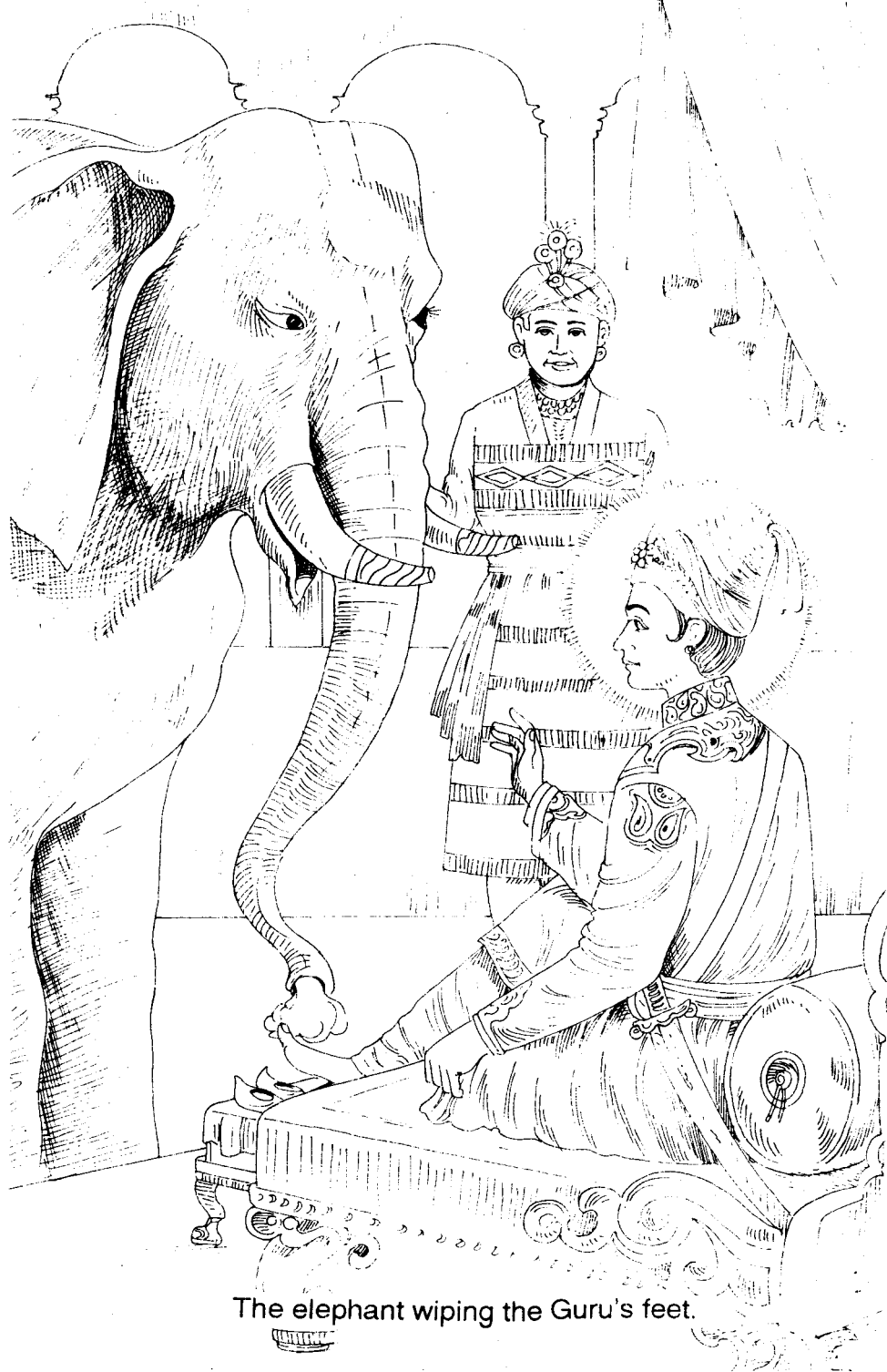


## **4. Raja Rattan Rai of Assam**

In Assam there is a place called Guru Ki Dhubari. A Sikh temple stands there in commemoration of Guru Nanak's visit. During one of his beneficent travellings of delivering good to the people of this part of the world, Guru Nanak had blessed Dhubari with his visit. While on his preaching mission to Bengal & Assam, Guru Teg Bahadur made Dacca in Bengal and Dhubari in Assam as his base camps. He was staying at Dhubari, when he received the news of the birth of Gobind Rai. Raja Ram Rai of Assam and his wife waited upon the Guru at Dhubari to seek his blessings for a son. They expressed the grief of their mind saying to the Guru, "The house of Guru Nanak stands high. It possesses all powers divine as well as wordly. We devotionally bow our heads to this door. The fear of leaving the world without a heir haunts us. Kindly pray for the grant of a son to us." Guru Teg Bahadur consoled the couple assuring them that benevolent God would fulfill their wish.

In due course a son was born to them. They named him Rattan Rai. The couple considered him to be a gift bestowed to them by Guru Teg Bahadur. Raja Ram Rai died when Rattan Rai was only seven. Rani brought him up with utmost care and love. She often reminded him that he was a gift given to them by the holy Guru Teg Bahadur. She related to him how the ninth Guru sacrificed his life to save the honour of India and defended the Hindu faith. The stories of Guru's supreme sacrifice and his mother's devotion for the Sikh Gurus kindled in young prince's mind a desire to visit Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib. His mother was even more anxious to pay homage to the deceased Guru, the saviour of India's honour and also to have the sight of the tenth Guru.

Thus preparations were made for the long journey to Anandpur. The Raja and his mother selected a number of choicest presents to be made over to the Guru as their humble offerings. The Rani told his son that Guru was pleased with whatever was offered with humility and love. The Raja entrusted the work of his state to his trusted minister and



The elephant wiping the Guru's feet.

accompanied by his mother and several of his nobles set out for Anandpur. It was a long journey; but the Raja and his retinue safely reached their destination. They were very honourably received at the Guru's Darbar. Rattan Rai with all humility offered his valuable presents to the Guru. Those consisted of five beautiful horses with golden trappings, a white elephant, a remarkable weapon, a drinking cup of great value and several costly and beautiful jewels and dresses. The elephant presented by the Raja was a trained and very intelligent animal. At the bidding of the Raja, he would perform so many things. He carried back the used arrows for the Guru. He would arrange the Guru's shoes for him to put his feet into them. He would hold the jug of water in his trunk and washed the Guru's feet, then he would wipe them with a towel. He would hold the 'Chaur' in his trunk and waved it over to the Guru. At night he would take two lighted torches in his trunk to lit the path for the Guru. The Guru named it Parsadi Hathi.

The wonderful weapon presented by the Raja, could be turned into a sword, a lance, a dagger, a club and a pistol just by pressing its different springs. The Raja demonstrated the mechanism of the weapon before the Guru.

Raja Rattan Rai was of the same age as the Guru was. So they developed likings for each other. Rattan Rai accompanied the Guru on his hunting trips. Together they would swim and bathe in the river Sutlej. The Guru treated him like a friend. The Raja reciprocated it by reposing his faith and devotion in the Guru. He was amused to watch the military activities carried out by the Guru and the Sikhs. He was impressed by the martial feats of the Guru, who was superb in the skill of archery. He also attended the prayer sessions both in the morning and evening. There he found the Guru an embodiment of godly spirituality. The prayer sessions provided the Raja with spiritual food. He never missed attending them. He also observed the scholarly pursuits being carried on at Anandpur for the development of mind and soul. All those activities were very appealing to him and he had been enjoying them in the company of Guru Gobind Rai. He had spent five months in Anandpur when he

sought the Guru's permission to go back to his state, Assam. The Guru gave him some presents which he accepted with the faith of a devout. Before his departure, he along with his mother and the nobles came to the Guru. He placed his head at the Guru's feet. The Guru affectionately lifted his head and embraced him. The Raja requested the Guru to give him his golden piece of advice. Thereupon the Guru said, "Always keep your mind firmly fixed on God. God's worship consists of doing one's duty honestly and diligently. The duty of a ruler is to treat his subjects as his own children. He should strive hard to make his people happy. He should sacrifice his comforts to bring comforts for his subjects. Righteousness alone should lead your doings. If you follow these good things, God will be pleased and he will confer on you peace and prosperity. I shall always be with you." The Guru went along with the Raja and his mother up to Kiratpur and bade them a touching send off.

## **5. Paunta Becomes the Centre**

Sikhism had its influence through out the length and breadth of India and even beyond its bounds. Its domains extended upto Assam and Chittagong in the East, Balkh and Bukhara in the West. Tibet and Ladakh in the North and Sangaldeep in the South. Scantly caring for the fear of Aurangzeb's tyrannical reaction, a very large number of Sikhs came to Anandpur after the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur to witness the coronation of Gobind Rai. Large scale activities, associated with the coronation unnerved Raja Bheem Chand of Bilaspur. He had the fear that Aurangzeb might reprimand him for his inaction against the Guru, who, according to his thinking was a rebel bent upon avenging the death of his father.

Guru Gobind Rai had revived the military traditions of his grand father, Guru Har Gobind Sahib. The offspring of old warriors, who had fought for him started coming in large number to place their services at the disposal of young Guru to utilise them as he pleased. Raja Bheem Chand, thus, sensed danger in the military activities of the young Guru.

In 1679, A.D. the Sikh-Sangat of Afghanistan and notably a wealthy Sikh Duni Chand got prepared a magnificent canopy and presented it to the young Guru as their humble offering. Even the Royal canopy could envy it in its grandeur. Raja Rattan Rai of Assam had presented some very valuable and costly gifts of which Parsadi Hathi was the prize gift. The glory of the Guru and the splendour of his possessions made Bheem Chand jealous of the Guru. Because of jealousy he would, sometimes, allow his subjects to plunder the Sikh-Sangat on its way to Anandpur. In retaliation, the Sikhs would attack the villages and punished the guilty. All those developments were becoming the causes for the strained relations between the Guru and the Raja. The climax reached, when the Guru refused to lend the Raja. 'Parsadi Hathi' and the magnificent canopy for the marriage of his son, Ajmer Chand. As Anandpur Sahib was situated in the territory of Bilaspur and the Raja considered the Guru as his subject, he planned to take action against the



Guru. Mata Gujri Ji and Mama Kirpal counselled the Guru to vacate Anandpur for sometime in order to alleviate the hostilities.

Right, during that period of time Raja Medni Parkash of Nahan was in distress. Raja Fateh Chand of Sri Nagar (Gharwal) had occupied some territory of his state. Beyond Yumuna in the Doon valley, Ram Rai, (the eldest and cursed son of Guru Har Rai) had considerable influence and a good followings. Raja Fateh Chand treated him with regards, considering him as an assets to him. In order to counteract the combination of Raja Fateh Chand and Ram Rai, Medni Parkash of Nehan had invited Guru Gobind Rai to his state to make his headquarters there. The Guru accepted his invitation because he had already decided to leave Anandpur. The Guru entrusted the defence of Anandpur in the hands of some soldiers and set out for Nahan along with his family, five hundred chosen soldiers and other paraphernalia.

The Guru and his entourage was accorded a very warm reception by Raja Medni Prakash and his nobles. He asked the Guru to select some good site to turn it into his headquarters. The Guru surveyed the area and selected a site surrounded by greenery near the bank of River Yamuna. The atmosphere there was captivating and picturesque. He named it 'Paunta'. Raja Medni Parkash extended all help and the Guru built there a fort and other buildings. Thus the town of Paunta came into existence and became the seat for the Guru.

Sikh-Sangat thronged to this place from all directions. Here the Guru, besides his military activities, absorbed himself in the study and translation of the ancient Sanskrit literature.

In his literary pursuits, he was assisted by 52 learned poets and scholars drawn from all over the country. It was at Paunta, that the literature of very higher order was composed. The Guru developed a style of Hindi poetry which has remained unsurpassed since his times. His forceful and soul stirring poems had the capability of arousing the dormant energies of his people. He acquired mastery over Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Brij Bhasha and Punjabi. To make his Sikh enlightened with the

lamp of knowledge, he sent some of them to Kashi (Benaras) for higher learning. Obviously his endeavour was to develop physical and mental faculties of his Sikhs.

The first thing he did at Paunta was to restore peace between the Rajas of Nahan and Srinagar. Fateh Chand was advised by Ram Rai to make peace with Medni Parkash. He said to him, "Medni Parkash has the true Guru by his side who is like a natural spring deriving unending sources, where as I am only a drop of this flowing stream." Fateh Chand then, approached the Guru, who softened the hearts of the two Rajas. Thus peace was restored between them. The Guru told the Rajas, "It is because of your narrow thinkings and selfish interests that you have been subjected to foreign rule. Your number runs into hundreds, you have your sources, what lacks you is your unity. If you unite, casting away your selfish motives, you can surely smash the might of the oppressive Mughals." But it was hard for the Rajas to cast away their apathy and risk their comforts for an uncertain independence from the alien rule.

Fateh Chand stayed at Nahan as the guest of Medni Parkash. Both the Rajas took the Guru with them while going for their game of chase. In the dense forest near Paunta, a tiger had turned into man-eater. A number of men and women of the area had fallen prey to the dreaded beast. The people of the area requested the Guru to protect them against the man-eater. They were so much fear stricken that they would shut themselves into their houses quite early before dusk. Accompanied by the two Rajas, the Guru set out to hunt the dreaded animal. They spotted it lying in the shade of a tree. It was a huge creature. The Rajas proposed that they should erect a scaffolding to shoot the man-eater from its heights. But the Guru turned down their suggestion and said that he would face the tiger with his sword and shield. Both the Rajas requested the Guru not to risk his life, but the Guru paid no heed and advanced towards the tiger. The tiger raised himself up and sprang upon the Guru with a terrorising roar. The Guru checked the brunt of his forepaws on his shield and then ripped open

his belly, piercing through his sword from his heart to waist. The tiger fell down on the ground and died. The Rajas were dazed at the daring feat of the Guru, who had killed the tiger single handed. The villagers were relieved of the fear of the man-eater. They thanked the Guru.

As the reputation and glory of the Guru had spread far and wide, people following different faiths and sects started visiting Paunta to seek his advice. Beside men of letters, (learned Brahmans and scholars) Sadhus, recluse, Pirs and Udasi Sikhs all came there to receive his blessings and enjoy his hospitality. The merit of literary people (poets scholars) was fully recognised and they were generously rewarded by the Guru. And for other people Guru's Langar was there to provide them with food irrespective of any distinction.



## 6. Sayyid Budhu Shah

Sadhaura is an ancient town about 25 kilometres from Paunta. Its old name was Sadhawar and it had remained the abode of Sants. During the days of Guru Gobind Singh, a Muslim Pir Sayyid Budhu Shah lived there. He was a land lord of the town and was leading a comfortable life. As he was a saint, his place was very often visited by Faqirs, Pirs and Sadhus. He was noble, God fearing, and charitable. The holy-men and the hungry persons had an easy access to his free kitchen. He had even made provision for a separate kitchen for the Hindus and it was run by Brahmans. Pir Budhu Shah had heard about the greatness and spiritual elevation of Baba Nanak and his successors. Now, the news about military preparations along with the spiritual activities of the tenth Guru at Paunta reached his ears. This made him curious to have a meeting with Gobind Rai, the tenth Guru. He had the desire to discuss certain spiritual matters with the Guru.

He took with him some disciples and reached Paunta. The splendour of a royal status prevailing at Paunta made him think, what kind of spiritual leader the Guru was. He went into the Guru's Darbar. The Guru seated the Pir by his side on his own seat. Pir Budhu Shah told the Guru that he had come to get clarification for certain spiritual matters. He remarked, "I have been practising penances. I have been striving for self mortification. But I have not achieved much success in my endeavour. Kindly guide me how can I become true? How can I smash the bands of falsehood to obtain the bliss of divine union?" The Guru advised him, "Let the will of God be honoured. It should guide you in your day today actions. Keep yourself away from the path of sins. This will finally lead you to the realm of truth and hence the divine bliss". The Pir realised that pleasures and pains in our lives are governed by the will of the lord and should be treated alike. He realised that the righteous conduct of gentleness and truth was the only means to attain the blissful divine union. This meeting made Pir Budhu Shah a faithful and trustworthy ally of the Guru for ever.

A few days after his return from Paunta, five hundred Pathan soldiers came to Pir Budhu Shah. They said to him, "We were in the service of the Emperor. He has got enraged because of our minor fault. He has dismissed us from his service. Military service is the only occupation we have been following since generations. Fearing the wrath of the Emperor, no one is prepared to employ us. Kindly find us service some where. We shall remain faithful to our employer. We shall not do any thing that brings bad name to you."

Pir Budhu Shah knew that Guru Gobind Rai had been strengthening his military prowess. He thought that he would be serving the cause of the Guru by getting those experienced Pathan fighters enlisted into his army. So he took them to Paunta. On his recommendations the Guru took them into his army. It was agreed upon that each officer would get Rs. 5/- and each soldier Rs. 1/- per day as his pay. They were five commanders, each had one hundred Pathan soldiers under his command. The commanders were, ie Haiyat Khan, Kale Khan, Nijabat Khan, Umre Khan and Bhikhan Khan. Haiyat Khan was their leader. Haiyat Khan was probably sent under conspiracy against the Guru by the Emperor.

The Pathan commanders and their cavaliers did military exercises and received their pay from the Guru's treasury. But before the battle of Bhangani in 1686 AD, they came to know that the hill chiefs under the command of Raja Fateh Chand were sure to attack the Guru. They held a meeting and decided to desert the Guru. They approached the Guru and requested him to grant them leave. Sango Shah the commander-in-Chief of the Guru's forces offered them five times their pay and tried to desist them from leaving the Guru's service. He even promised them rich reward after the victory, but as they had turned traitors they did not listen to him and deserted the Guru. They even joined the enemy forces against the Guru.

The Guru despatched a message to Pir Budhu Shah stating the treacherous role played by the Pathans. Pir Budhu Shah felt as if he were, himself, treacherously betrayed by the faithless Pathans. He rushed to Bhangani along with 700





Pir Budhu Shah receiving gifts from the Guru

disciples, and seven sons as to provide reinforcement to the Guru's army. Many of his disciples and two of his sons laid down their lives in the battle field fighting for the Guru. However, the battle ended into total defeat for the hill chiefs and a glorious victory for the Guru. One of the Pathan leaders Kale Khan did not join the enemy's forces. He left away to some other place.

After the battle, Pir Budhu Shah along with his surviving sons and disciples went to the Guru to take leave of him. The Guru praised him for his loyalty and the help, he extended in the battle-field. The Guru said to him, "Do not lament over the loss of your two sons. They have courted martyrdom in the bravest of manner. They will live for ever in God's blissful presence."

Sayyid Budhu Shah replied that his sons had made an excellent use of their lives by sacrificing them for the love of God and the Guru. He further said that he did not at all mourn their death, thinking that they would, surely secure seats in heaven (Paradise).

To reward Sayyid Budhu Shah for his timely help and his fruitful services, the Guru conferred on him the most precious gift of God's name. He also gave him Rs. 5000/- in cash and a robe of honour. The Guru was, at that time, combing his hair Budhu Shah requested the Guru to give him the comb with his loose hair in it. He said that he would treat them as his most precious possessions. Thereupon the Guru placed the comb with loose hair in it on one half of his own turban and gave them over to Pir Budhu Shah. He also gave him a dagger. For the Pir those gifts were his sacred assets and in order to preserve them, he placed them inside the wall of his prayer room. This wall collapsed in 1813 and all those gifts were found intact. Those were believed to be with the family of the good Pir.

Aurangzeb did not appreciate the regards of Budhu Shah for the Guru. Acting upon his order, Usman Khan, the ruler of Sadhaura, attacked Pir Budhu Shah, a few years after the battle of Bhangani. He killed the Pir and his wife. In 1708 A.D. Banda Bahadur hanged Usman Khan as punishment for his crime of killing Pir Budhu Shah.

## **7. Mahant Kirpal And Confectioner Lal Chand. And The Battle of Bhangani.**

Raja Bheem Chand of Bilaspur had become an enemy of the Guru. His enmity had forced the Guru to leave Anandpur for Nahan. In order to solemnize the wedding of his son to the daughter of Fateh Chand of Srinagar, he went to Srinagar. Almost all the hill chiefs had gathered there for the occasion of marriage. He apprised them of the military activities of the Guru. He also cautioned them against the Guru's cult of classless society. He said, "The activities of the Guru were detrimental to the safety of their rule." He further unnerved them saying, "You will provoke the wrath of the Emperor if you allow the embryo of revolt against him to develop in your region." He even threatened Raja Fateh Chand and said, "If you do not accede to my proposal of attacking the Guru, I shall go back to my capital without taking your daughter as bride". Thus Raja Bheem Chand was successful in instigating the Rajas for an attack on the Guru. So vigorous preparations for the attack started at Srinagar. The faithless Pathans who had deserted the Guru also reached Srinagar to assist Raja Fateh Chand of Srinagar in his preparations for the battle against the Guru.

An informer brought the news that the attack was imminent. Guru Gobind Rai was a young man of twenty, highly spirited and full of confidence. The desertion of Pathans at this juncture was a great loss, but he had the faith in God and did not allow the fear cast its shadow on him.

As the Pathan soldiers had deserted, the Guru needed the help of other men to make up the depleted strength of his fighting men. There were about five hundred Udasi Sikhs in Paunta. They were supported by the Guru. They were provided with rich diet. They were treated as religious people deserving respect. But most of them were idlers, who smeared their

bodies with ash, consume rich diet and spent their time in idle discussions, gossips, rest and sleep. No wonder they had grown fat and lethargic.

The desertion of the Pathans had reduced the number of fighting men on the side of the Guru. So, he sent a word to the Udasis to keep themselves ready for the battle. The Guru's order had unnerved them. They held a meeting and decided to flee away during the night. Their argument for the flight was, "We have not left our homes and hearths to be killed by the dreaded Pathans and the experienced soldiers of the hill Chiefs. As for food, we shall knock at some one other's door. The Guru's kitchen is not the only kitchen in the world to support us. We shall find some other source to feed us." As they were nervous and did not like to risk their lives, they stealthily slipped away from Paunta during the night.

Next day when the Guru was informed of the incident, he smiled and asked if all had run away. He was told that their leader Mahant Kirpal had not fled. The Guru called Mahant Kirpal and asked, "O! Mahant, where are your Udasis? They have nourished their bodies at our cost, but now in an hour of our need, they have run away. How faithless have they proved?"

Mahant Kirpal Dass, knelt before the Guru and exclaimed, "O! Lord, they were your disciples. Good or bad we are yours. You are Father, capable of forgiving the unworthy children. I am here. The whole of myself is at your service." At this the Guru remarked, "If the root is here, then every thing is here. The root has the power to regenerate the tree. If the Mahant had fled, the relations with the Udasis would have been severed for ever. They would have been turned out from the folds of the Sikhism." The flight of the Udasis at that stage was another blow for the Guru, still he, remained in high spirits.

He selected Bhagani, ten kilometres upwards Paunta as the battle-field. Strategically it was a suitable site, because it was a ferry station and at the back of the vast field there was the coverage of the hills. The Guru made Sango Shah, his cousin, the commander of his fighting forces. He, along with his four

brothers, who were great warriors, fought valiantly for the Guru. The hill chiefs were the first to launch their attack on the Guru's soldiers. Sango Shah gave them a pitched battle and checked their advance. Pir Budhu Shah and his men engaged Gopal Chand Guleria and his soldiers. One of his sons died fighting against them. Raja Kirpal, the uncle of the Guru went forward with his men and pushed back the advancing forces of Raja Gopal Chand. He, was thus able to lift the dead body of Pir Budhu Shah's son.



Mahant Kirpal in the battle field

Seeing that the resistance being put forth by the Guru's soldiers, was unexpected Raja Fateh Chand brought Haiyat Khan forward and said to him, "You know all about the Guru's soldiers and their fighting skill. Let your sword teach them a lesson never to forget." Haiyat Khan and his men, then, made a forceful attack and pushed back Sikh soldiers. Mahant Kirpal Dass, who was standing near the Guru requested him to let him go and fight against Haiyat Khan. The Guru said to him, "You are a saint. You do not know how to wield a sword. You have no experience of fighting. It is better you should pray for my success." But Mahant Kirpal Dass said that the Guru should let him go to face the mighty Pathan general with his wooden club. He said to the Guru, "With your grace I will smash the head of faithless Pathan with my club." The Guru allowed him to fight.

Mahant Kirpal then, mounted a horse, and with a club on his shoulder plunged into the battle field. He was not wearing any uniform. He had his body smeared with ash. He was sitting on the back of the horse with his fat belly projected far in front of his saddle. For a while all eyes were fixed on this strange sight of a naked Sadhu penetrating into the battle field. He challenged Haiyat Khan to taste the blow of his club. He said to him, "You faithless mean fellow! I shall avenge your treacherous action by killing you in the battle field." When Haiyat Khan found that the Mahant was bent upon a fight with him, he lifted his sword and aimed a powerful blow at the Mahant. The latter received the blow on his club. Haiyat's sword had struck against the club with so much force that it broke into pieces. That was a miracle indeed. The Mahant was excited, he thundered, "O, faithless jackal! Now it is my turn to strike. Be careful. Defend yourself." So saying the Mahant rose on his stirrups. He lifted his club high above his head in both of his hands, aimed, at Haiyat Khan's head and gave a forceful blow. The wooden club struck against the head so forcefully that it broke Haiyat Khan's skull. He fell down from his horse. The other Pathan soldiers tried to surround the Mahant but Jeet Mal along with his soldiers went to his help and safely brought him back.

The Guru praised Mahant Kirpal for his bravery. After the victory the Guru honoured the Mahant by giving him one half of his own turban.

The story of Mahant's bravery reached many ears. The killing of an experienced general by a Sadhu with his club was indeed a miracle. People believed that it was the result of Guru's blessings. They said, "Our Guru is all capable. He has infused new life into the dead souls.

He has transformed the cowards and weaklings of yesterday into bold and strong men, who are to-day challenging the mightiest. Truly, his sparrows are capable of hunting down the hawks of the enemy." So much was the excitement even among the ordinary people that they forgot all about their work and came forward to fight for the Guru. One such example is of Lal Chand, a confectioner.

Kindled with the desire to fight for the Guru, he approached him to go into the battle field. Seeing his zeal, the Guru allowed him. Sango Shah was bearing the pressure of the assault exerted by general Bheekhan Shah. Lal Chand Mahi a mighty wrestler requested the Guru to send him for the help of Sango Shah. Both Lal Chand Mahi and Lal Chand, confectioner went to relieve the pressure on Sango Shah. They put up such a firm resistance that the perplexed Pathans asked their commander whom they had been fighting against. His answer was, "One is Mahi and the other is Halwai (a confectioner).

Hearing that they had been fighting against a Halwai, Amir Khan an officer rushed at Lal Chand Halwai and attacked him with his sword. The confectioner, however, defended himself and in his retaliatory attack severed Amir's head of his body. He was praised for his bold feat by one and all alike.

Sango Shah was the commander of the Guru's forces. The Pathans and the hill chiefs tried again and again to uproot him. Raja Hari chand rained his arrows on him and Najabat Khan engaged him into sword fighting. When Sango Shah's sword broke down, he used his scimitar. He was badly wounded but before falling down dead, he killed general Najib Khan with his

scimitar. With the death of Najib Khan the enemy soldiers lost heart; but Raja Hari Chand, who was proud of his arch-manship did not leave the battle field. Instead he charged three arrows consecutively aiming at the Guru. The first arrow grazed past Guru's ear, the second struck his steed (horse) while the third penetrating through his buckle touched his body. As the arrow had touched his body, it aroused his anger. He, then, shot an arrow from his bow. It struck the target, Hari Chand and killed him. With the death of Raja Hari Chand the enemy soldiers ran away from the battle field in a great disorder.

The Battle of Bhangani was the first battle of his life and the Guru secured a total victory in it. To celebrate the victory, the Guru held a big diwan and honoured the heroes of the battle.

Prince Ajit Singh, (the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh) who was then a four month old child, was attributed with the name of Ajit symbolising the victory in the battle.

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## **8. 'Sword', the Goddess of Power**

The battle of Bhangani had humbled the pride of Raja Bheem Chand of Bilaspur. He was now aware of the Guru's power. So the Guru came back to Anandpur. As the victory had given the Sikhs new impetus to intensify their military activities, they began preparations for the fortification and the defence of Anandpur. The Guru did not entertain any ambition to occupy any territory and establish his rule there. However for the defence of Anandpur, he built four forts ie Keshgarh, Lohgarh, Anandpur and Fatehgarh. Of course, Anandpur was the strongest of all.

In the mountain region, worship of goddess of force (Shakti) was popular among the masses. As the Guru was emerging as the symbol of force (Shakti) some Brahman priests approached him and suggested that he should invoke the goddess of force (Kali) to aid him for the destruction of demons ie the cruel rulers. The Guru said to the priests, "I worship only the Supreme Being." I derive my strength from Him. I do not believe in any diety except the True and Deathless One. He is my force."

But Kesho Dutt, the head priest asserted that he could make the goddess of force appeared. He said that he would perform 'Havan' (fire worship) to invoke the goddess. He would keep the sacred fire burning continuously by flinging into it Ghee, incense and all other material required for the ceremony . He said that way the goddess would appear to bless them.

In order to show the futility of such ceremonies to his followers, he asked Kesho Dutt, the priest to try and prove his assertion.

Kesho Dutt, the priest got all the material needed for the 'havan' and to keep the sacred fire burning. He started the usual ceremonies relevant to the 'Havan' at Naina Devi with the ostensible object of making the goddess appear. He recited Mantras. He burnt Ghee. The continuous burning of ghee and incense had made the atmosphere pure and the air there was full of fragrances and sweet smells, but the aim had not been

achieved. Although the ceremonies connected with the 'havan' had been being carried out over a year, yet the priest was not able to make the goddess appear.

One day, the Guru asked the priest when the goddess would appear. The priest replied, "The goddess will reveal herself only if a holyman of high lineage sacrifices himself at the altar. As soon as his head flings into the fire, the goddess will appear." The Guru had already foreseen the uselessness of those ostensible ceremonies. He smiled at the statement of the Priest and said, "Pandit Jee, you have been performing the sacred Hom ceremonies for over a year, keeping yourself pure and noble. Again you are a Brahman of high lineage. I think we cannot find a holier man than you for the sacrifice."

Hearing those words of the Guru the priest grew pale. He began to tremble with fear. He saw death staring at him. He left the place on a false pretext and fled away. The Guru flung all the remaining stuff into the 'hom' fire in one go. As the 'hom' was being performed on the lofty hill the flames of the blazing fire were seen far miles around. People thought that the goddess had appeared at last and that she had bestowed on the Guru her 'Shakti' in the form of Sword. But the Guru did not keep the people in illusion. He told them that the priest's approach for Shakti was not healthy, it could lead to damper their spirits making them inactive idlers depending on mysterious powers. He brandished his sword and said, "Sword is the real deity. It is the symbol of 'Shakti' (force). I advocate its worship. Use it for the protection of saints and the destruction of oppressors."

The Guru composed verses highly appreciating the qualities of different kinds of weapon. Following the example of their Guru, the Sikhs also became deeply attached to the weapons of war. The sight of heavily armed Nehang Singhs is the manifestation of their love for the weapons, a legacy came down to them from the lord, Guru Gobind Singh.

## **9. The Abolition of Masand's office**

The fourth Guru, Guru Ram Dass had established the office of Masand. He had appointed Masands in different parts of the country. Their primary duty was to preach the golden principles of the Sikh faith. Only such persons were chosen as Masands who were known for their piety, integrity and high morality. The Guru had enjoined upon his followers to contribute one tenth of their income towards the community funds. The Sikhs observed the Guru's injunction very faithfully. They would pay the Guru's dues more readily and unfailingly than they paid the taxes to the Mughal kings.

The Masands collected the tithes from the Sikhs of their areas. Every year on Baisakhi day a great Darbar was held at Amritsar. It was attended by all pious Sikhs. There the Masands would present their collections to the Guru.

Gradually the office of Masand became hereditary in the families of first incumbents. With the passage of time the office of Masand fell into the hands of unworthy persons. Such persons were easy to be exploited. Prithia exploited such element of greedy Masands against Guru Arjan Dev. Ram Rai and Dhirmal also purchased some corrupt Masands to discomfort Guru Har Rai. But their foul efforts did not bring to them much success.

After the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, most of the Masands began to think that they were the pillars over which the existence of the Guru rested. Finding Guru Gobind Rai, a child they had become more unscrupulous. Their behaviour towards the Sikhs had become rude and objectionable. So much so that they treated the poor Sikhs as if they were their slaves. They would force the poor Sikhs to part with all they had. They would realise the obligatory tithes with much severity behaving as if they were the authorities empowered to punish the evaders. The fleecing of Sikhs in such a cruel manner by the Masands was felt and the matter was reported to the Guru. A drama was enacted to show to the Guru how the greedy and cruel Masands fleeced the Sikhs in the name of

their Guru. The Guru had, himself an experience of the deceitful conduct of a Masand named Dulcha.

Dulcha was performing his duties as Guru's Masand in Multan. Rupa a well-to-do Sikh had given to him some costly presents, including two gold bracelets as his contribution towards community funds. Dulcha deposited the other items into the Guru's treasury but concealed gold bracelets in his turban. When the Guru asked him if he had deposited all his collections to the treasury. He replied that he had done so. The Guru sprang from his seat and removed Dulcha's turban. The gold bracelets fell down from it. Dulcha felt sorry and admitted that he had fallen prey to his greed.

After this incident, it was obviously revealed upon the Guru that the Masands had morally deteriorated to such an extent that some remedial measures had become necessary. Sensing that the Guru would resort to some strong action against them the Masands floated the rumours that the Guru was under the reactionary influence of the goddess (Shakti). They said, "We work for the Guru. We collect donations for him. We support him. We undertake journeys and face risks for the Guru. But he has become inimical to us. He should know, we are the source of his strength and splendour. Truly the strange behaviour of the Guru towards us is due to the goddess reaction."

No doubt there were some pious Masands who had maintained their saintly character. One such Masand was Bhai Pheru, 'Suchi Darhi'. He had not sent his collections of tithes to the Guru for a long period. So he was brought into the Guru's presence as a defaulter by the Guru's men. He was holding his long beard with his hands indicating that he was guilty and deserved punishment. The Guru asked him, "Why have you not sent the remittance for such a long time?" Bhai Pheru did not answer. Holding his beard in his hands he pleaded for punishment for his fault. The Guru smiled and said that Bhai Pheru's contribution had been being received by him directly and that Bhai Pheru was a man of truthful character. He said he should be called Bhai Pheru 'Suchi Darhi'. In fact Bhai Pheru had been

spending the amount of tithes on feeding the poor people, thus practising in letter and spirit the lesson of the Guru that the mouth of a Sikh is the cash-chest of the Guru." So he was not treated as a defaulter by the Guru.

Cheto was a leading Masand. He was in the habit of misappropriating the funds. A Sikh presented to him some valuable presents to be made over to the Guru. Those included two bracelets studded with jewels. He had deposited the other items, but kept the bracelets for himself. He instructed the gatekeeper not to allow the donor Sikh to enter the Guru's Darbar. The donor Sikh had tried but the 'darban' would not let him go in. The Guru noticed it. He sent a Sikh Sewadar to bring the Sikh in. The Sikh Sewadar brought the donor Sikh with him. The gate keeper restricted his entry saying that Cheto Masand had instructed him not to allow him to see the Guru. The Sewadar Sikh told him that the Guru himself wanted to meet that Sikh. So they went inside. The matter was reported to the Guru. Cheto was called to the Guru's presence. He saw the donor Sikh sitting close to the Guru. Cheto got frowned and angrily stared at the Sikh. The Guru asked Cheto, "Have you deposited all the offerings presented by the Sikh into the Toshakhana?" Cheto folded his hands and remarked that he had. The Guru got the details from the treasury and showed those to the Sikh. The Sikh told the Guru that the jewels studded bracelet set had not been included in the list.

Hearing this Cheto got furious. He burst out at the Sikh saying, "You are a liar. You are blaming me of dishonesty. What a cunning Sikh you are! I and the other Masands toil for the Guru. We collect the tithes and honestly deposit those into the Guru's treasury. You, meanfellow, is making me suspicious in the eyes of the Guru." Turning to the Guru he said, "Don't trust this liar Sir."

But the Guru sent two Sikhs to Cheto's house and instructed them to break open the lock of the box lying in his room and remarked that they would find the jewelled bracelets there. The Sikhs did as they were asked and came back with the jewelled bracelets. Cheto was sinking because of shame. He approached Guru's mother to protect him from the Guru's

punishment. Cheto was forgiven at the intervention of Mata Gujri Ji. But the Guru, then, decided to put to an end to the intermediary role played by the Masands. In order to establish direct relations between the Guru and the Sikhs, he abolished the office of Masand.

## **10. The Battle of Nadaun 1686 A.D**

Emperor Aurangzeb was occupied subduing the Bahmani kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda in the far of Deccan. The constant absence of the sovereign from his capital was deemed to bring about inefficiency and slackness in the official machinery. Its effect was that the petty chiefs started defying governmental obligations. The hill chiefs were no exceptions. They stopped sending yearly tribute to the imperial exchequer. For a few years, they were not disturbed to explain their rebellious conduct. Then the Emperor ordered General Mian Khan to chastise the defaulters and realise the arrears of the tribute. General Mian Khan made his base camp at Jammu and ordered General Alif Khan to proceed towards Kangra and realise the dues.

Sensing the impending danger of an attack knocking at their door, most of the hill chiefs gathered at Bilaspur to think over the means of beating back General Alif Khan. Raja Bheem Chand and his allies the rajas had recently suffered a humiliating defeat at the Guru's hand in the battle of Bhangani. They had tasted the steel of his sword. It had vividly revealed upon them of what stuff the Guru was made of. They now recognised that the Guru was a power to reckon with and that his position deserved their regards. The hill chiefs and especially Raja Bheem Chand of Bilaspur were in their hearts of heart inimical towards the Guru; but at that juncture, they thought it prudent to develop cordial relations with the Guru, apparently to secure his help against Alif Khan. They had the conviction that with the Guru on their side they would be able to form a winning combination capable of defeating the Mughal General. Consequently Dewan Parma Nand, a minister of Bilaspur, Pandit Pamma and Raja Prithi Chand visited the Guru as representatives of the Rajas to seek his support against General Alif Khan. They were received with due courtesy at the Guru's court. The Guru told them that he bore no ill will against any one, despite the hostile attitude of Raja Bheem Chand against him. He said, "I am pleased to hear that the Rajas have girded up their loins against the rule of tyranny. I want them to

form a formidable united front against the Mughal rule. They should forget their jealousy against one another. They should rise above their selfish considerations and make a bid to remove away the noose of slavery hanging around their necks. He reminded them that the curse of disunity among them was the cause of their subjection to the foreign rule. He assured the representatives of the Rajas that he would come to help them with his Sikhs.

But the evil of disunity, jealousy and selfishness played its part rendering the alliance of the hill chiefs hollow and weakling. Raja Kirpal Chand of Kangra and Raja Dyal Chand of Bijarwal reached at an understanding with General Alif Khan by paying half of their dues and lending their support against Raja Bheem Chand and others in lieu of the balance. They, thus, played handle to the General's sword against their own brothers. When the news reached the Guru, he condemned the cowardly conduct of the two Rajas.

Raja Bheem Chand, Raja Prithi Chand, Raja Sukhdev Singh, Raja Ram Singh and Raja Raj Singh were determined to fight against the General and his allies, the two hill chiefs. They led their troops to Nadaun. Nadaun is situated on the banks of river, Beas. It is about 30 kilometers South East of Kangra. It was here that a well contested battle was fought. Raja Kirpal Chand and his allies had erected a wooden enclosure on a lofty hill side. Their troops were thus in an advantageous position to shoot their arrows at the Raja's troops who in their bid to assault had tried climbing the hill. While their gun shots and arrows caused little loss to Kirpal's soldiers who were safe in the wooden enclosure, there were a large number of casualties on the side of Raja Bheem Chand and his allies. Bheem Chand became disheartened to find that dislodging of Kirpal and others from the wooden enclosure was near impossible as long as his troops could gain a height from where they might fire within the wooden enclosure. To overcome this obstacle, the Guru and his Sikhs made a violent charge and succeeded in reaching even a higher spot, from where their arrows could cause havoc for the enemy's soldiers.



The Guru's shots of arrows, soon, forced the inmates to leave the improvised wooden fort and come out to escape from sure death there.

In the meantime the troops of Raja Bheem Chand and Raja Prithi Chand regained their confidence. They fought a pitched and spirited battle against the soldiers of General Alif Khan remaining firm footed on the ground. Raja Dyal Chand and his soldiers were engaged fighting against the Sikh soldiers. The Guru cautioned Raja Dyal to defend himself against his gun shot. He then, fired a gun shot which proved fatal for Raja Dyal. After it the Guru shot arrows with such a velocity as to create chaotic confusion among the enemy's soldiers. They fled from the field again to take shelter inside the wooden enclosure. The night having fallen and the darkness had thickened, both sides ceased fighting. During the night Alif Khan, and Raja Kirpal along with their troops slipped away from the wooden enclosure caring little even for their wounded and dead soldiers, giving victory to the Rajas and the Guru. On the advice of the Guru the wounded soldiers were nursed irrespective of the distinction of being enemy or friend. The dead soldiers of both sides were cremated on the bank of the river, Beas.

The Guru stayed at Nadaun for eight days. The Rajas and the people from the surrounding villages came to have his Darshan. He, then, returned to Anandpur and was accorded a tumultuous welcome by the citizens of the town and the people of the adjoining villages.

## **11. The Expedition of Khan Zada**

The shameful defeat of General Alif Khan had broken the myth that the Mughals and the Pathans were invincible. For Subedar Dilawar Khan it was a danger signal for Mughal supremacy. According to his way of thinking the Hindus should be kept suppressed, never allowed to look straight into the eyes of the Mughals and the Pathans. He wanted to safeguard the fallacy that militarily they were more skilful than the Hindus. Although three years had passed since Alif Khan's defeat, yet it had not ceased pricking the egoistic minds of the Mughal rulers. Now Dilawar Khan, who was known for his bravery and a good record of victories throughout the Punjab, resolved to restore the dwindling sway of the Mughals in the hilly region of the Panjab.

In spite of his victory against General Alif Khan, Raja Bheem Chand had lost his heart. He had made peace with Alif Khan and paid his tribute to the imperial authorities. But again most of the hill chiefs including Raja Bheem Chand had become defaulters, thus provoking fresh action of the rulers against them.

Dilawar Khan had two motives in his mind. The first was to realise the tribute from the Rajas and the other was to punish the Guru for siding with the Rajas against Alif Khan and thereby re-establishing the Mughal authority in the region.

Dilawar had a youthful son, Rustam Khan. He volunteered himself to avenge the defeat of Alif Khan. Dilwar Khan agreed and sent a powerful expedition under his captaincy against the Guru and the hill chiefs. He was instructed to keep his movements secret and strike first at the Guru without giving him any time for making preparations for defence. Accordingly his soldiers marched towards Anandpur without making their advance known. He crossed the river, Sutlej at the dead of night and lay encamped near Anandpur. As his soldiers were tired after the day long journey, they retired to sleep, without the slightest fear of being attacked by the Sikhs.

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Massa, a vigilant Sikh spy informed Alam Singh, the guard of the Guru's palace about the arrival of Mughal soldiers at the other side of the river. He urged Alam Singh to pass the information to the Guru immediately as an attack on the Guru was certain. He told him that the Mughal soldiers were sleeping then, and a surprise attack by the Guru might turn tables on them. Alam Singh lost no time to inform the Guru about the approaching danger. The Guru, at once got himself ready and the beating of the drum (The Ranjit Nagara) alerted the Sikhs to arm themselves and reach the Guru. The beatings of Ranjit Nagara on odd hours was a sort of emergency signal for the soldiers to arm themselves and reach the Guru for a sudden confrontation against the enemy. It was also to serve as an alarming sound for the people to be vigilant lest they should be caught unawared. Within minutes the Sikh soldiers reached the Guru. They were divided into small groups. Each group was placed under the command of a captain.

A vanguard was sent to engage the enemy's soldiers in fighting. A group of the Sikh soldiers started firing gun shots from the ramparts of the fort. The other groups of the Sikh soldiers marched towards the enemy raising their war cry of Akal Akal. Nature seemed to be in favour of the Guru and his Sikh soldiers. The heavy rains over the hills had overflowed the neighbouring ravine. It carried away large numbers of Rustam Khan's troops. The rest being panic stricken were baffled to face the Sikh soldiers. The noise of the gun shots and the cries of Akal, Akal made them believe that they would have to face a large army. Finding his soldiers in a dejected state of mind, Rustam Khan thought it wise to beat a hasty retreat without clashing his arms against the Guru. Thus the Guru won the battle without fighting for it.

As the flooded ravine became the main cause of Rustam Khan's defeat, the grateful Sikh up to this day call this brook Hamayati Nullah (The friendly brook).

## **12. Hussein's Expedition 1695 AD**

Rustam Khan's shameful retreat provoked Hussein's anger against the Guru and the hill chiefs of Punjab. Hussein was a slave, brought up by Dilawar Khan, the Subedar of Lahore. Because of his proven talent as a soldier, he rose to become the commandant of a company of soldiers under Dilawar Khan. He boasted that his oppressive sword would plant terror into the hearts of his adversaries. He assured Dilawar Khan that he would wipe out the disgrace of the previous defeats at the hands of the Guru and that he would also teach a lesson to the defiant hill chiefs. Dilawar Khan put him at the head of a battalion with two thousand chosen soldiers. Alif Khan was also asked to accompany Hussein as advisor. He was well conversant with the tendency of the hill chiefs. Besides it he was familiar with the hilly terrains and terraces, because of his previous expedition.'

The news reached Anandpur that a fresh expedition under the command of dreaded Hussein was on the march probably to storm Anandpur.

The Masands fearing disaster prevailed upon Mata Gujri to advise his son, the Guru, to avoid clashing his arms against Hussain. But the Guru comforted Mata Gujri, telling her that Massand's concerns were unfounded. He said, "As they are unaccustomed to warfare, they prefer avoiding the clash. Rest assure, Hussein shall not be able to reach Anandpur." This statement of the Guru relieved the hearts of Mata ji and the Masands off from the troubling apprehension.

Chattar Singh Berar was one of the Guru's spies. He was proficient in speaking and understading Persian and Pushto languages and also the spoken language of the hilly region. He informed the Guru that Hussein had decided first to settle scores with Gopal, the Raja of Guler who had refused to pay Rs. 10,000/- as tribute to him.

Raja Kirpal Katoch of Kangra and Raja Bheem Chand of Bilaspur, as usual, joined the forces of Hussein, thus strengthening the striking power of his already strong force.

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The combined armies of Hussein and the Rajas besieged Guler, the capital town of Raja Gopal.

Raja Ram Singh of Jasswal and some other Rajput Sardars of the area extended their help to Raja Gopal. But he felt, the small force at his command would not be able to defend itself against the far superior force of the besiegers. So he sent his envoys to Anandpur to seek the blessings and the help of the Guru. The Guru atonce, despatched three hundred horsemen under the commands of Bhai Sangtia Singh, Agarhi Berar, Lal Chand and Ganga Ram. After securing the help of the Guru, Raja Gopal and him allies were in a position to present a better show of their action in the battle field.

Raja Kirpal and Raja Bheem Chand knew that the Sikh soldiers would rather embrace death than face a defeat. So they decided to play a cunning game for Gopal's discomfiture. They contacted Sangtia Singh and suggested to him to bring Gopal to meet them for a negotiated settlement in order to escape bloodshed on both sides. The Guru had advised Sangtia Singh to safeguard the interest of Raja Gopal. He informed Raja Gopal about the suggestion of the two Rajas for a meeting with him. He agreed provided Sangita Singh guaranteed him his safe return. He assured him his safety. Acting as an intermediary Sangtia Singh arranged the meeting. But at the meeting, Gopal smelt foul on the part of the two Rajas, who had, infact hatched a conspiracy either killed him or made him captive. Through the language of eyes, Gopal conveyed the fear of his minds to Sangtia Singh. He acted wisely and swiftly and had taken Gopal under the protection of his troopers, before the two Rajas could grasp the situation. He, then, safely brought the Raja back to Guler.

The failure of the conspiracy necessitated an immediate attack on Raja Gopal by Hussain and the two Rajas. Thus started the bloody battle. Sangita Singh, Agarhi Berar, Raja Gopal and Raja Ram Singh's combine was combating against Hussain, Raja Kirpal and Raja Bheem Chand. Hussain made an advance with a company of his soldiers and fell upon Raja Ram Singh. The latter not only defended himself, but cut down a

number of Hussein's soldiers. Hussein was startled to see many of his soldiers fallen on the ground and licking the dust. Still he did not lose his heart and continued battling against Ram Singh and his soldiers. But soon an arrow released by Ram Singh pierced through his chest and made him join the fate of his fallen soldiers.

Hussain's death ignited Kirpal's anger. He made a vigorous charge on Sangtia Singh. The latter fought fiercely; but was got entrapped along with his seven horse men. They were surrounded by the enemy's soldiers. In spite of their brave fight, they could not break the ambit of the enemy's soldiers. No doubt they killed Raja Kirpal, Himmat Khan and Kimat Khan; but, they also fell dead fighting to the last man.

Agarhi Berar and his soldiers fought along side Raja Gopal and his soldiers. They killed Raja Prithi Chand, Raja Ram Chand, Shamsheer Khan and Daler Khan. Berar and his nine horsemen continued fighting boldly till each of them met his end in the battle field.

Seeing that Hussein, Kirpal and many other leaders of the alliance had been killed, Bheem Chand retraced his steps and left the battle field. The depleted army of Hussein too lost courage to remain steadfast and ran away, leaving the field for Raja Gopal to announce his victory.

Raja Gopal along with his relatives, paid a visit to Anandpur. He thanked the Guru for his help. He praised the Sikh soldiers for their bravery. Seventeen Sikh soldiers had sacrificed their lives in the battle. The Raja was grateful to the Guru. He presented to the Guru valuable presents by way of his gratitude.

The Guru's prediction that Hussein would not reach Anandpur proved true, as the latter lost his life in the battle against Raja Gopal of Guler.

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### **13. Expedition of ShahZada Muazzam. 1696 A D.**

The news of the repeated repulsions of the Governor's armies at the hands of the Guru and the hill chiefs of the Punjab, had been reaching the Emperor in the Deccan since 1686 AD. All those defeats were enough to disturb his sleeps, but when the news about the disaster of Hussain's soldiers reached him, he was beside himself with rage. He castigated the officials in-charge of the Punjab's affairs for their inability to restore order in the Punjab hills. The unending disturbance in the hills for such a long period was a matter of great concern. He could not keep his eyes shut over the grave situation which was similar to an open rebellion against his authority. Punjab, being the most important, and efficiently governed province, could not be left unattended against the erosion of his sway there. The Emperor was informed that Guru Gobind Singh had been aiding and abetting the hill chiefs in their defiance against the Mughal rule and that he was instrumental in causing all the reverses suffered by the Governor's armies. Finding that the situation there demanded stern action he sent prince Muazam, (the heir apparent) to lead the imperial troops against the Guru and the hill chiefs.

Prince Muazam reached Lahore and camped himself there. He sent an expedition under General Mirza Beg to chastise the Guru and the Rajas. At the initial stages the expedition faced stiff resistance and suffered disaster. The Prince was disappointed. He was indignant and decided to take the field in person.

Bhai Nand Lal was a devout follower of the Guru. He was the private secretary to the Prince. The Prince admired him for his learning and pious character. He had great regards for him for his good qualities. He told the prince that the Guru was a highly religious man, revered alike by the Hindu Saints and the Muslim divines and that his lofty character and great virtues had won him the praises of the Sufi saints. Speaking about the Guru, Bhai Nand Lal apprised the prince that he was the light

of God preaching oneness of God and the brotherhood of man, a perfect saint who entertained no ambitions for kingdoms or pelf. He further told the prince that the Guru had wielded sword to uphold the righteousness and destroy the evil. He suggested that such a perfect saint should more be approached for his blessings than dragging him to fighting.

Prince Muazam, thus, gave up the idea of attacking the holy Guru. He thought it wise not to molest the saint of God. But the imperial troops under the command of Mirza Beg taught the Rajas a lesson. They fully avenged the previous defeats. They inflicted upon the Rajas defeat after defeat. The Mughal soldiers plundered the country, burnt the houses and caused devastation alround. The Rajas were so severely battered that they lost all courage. They were thoroughly demoralised. They were so much terrorised that they gave up all hope of fighting their way out to freedom ever in future. The punishment they received had revealed upon them that provoking the wrath of the Emperor and defying his authority was a path too dangerous for them to follow and beyond their capacity to cope with. They arrived at the conclusion that loyalty to the Delhi was the best course for them to stick to and they should never entertain the illusory idea of their sovereignty. The Rajas begged the prince for his pardon. They made abject apologies for their defiance and assured the prince never to deviate from the path of loyalty to the Emperor.

The disgraces and humiliations suffered by the Rajas had humbled their pride and they were now content with the status of faithful vassals of the Delhi rulers. But they perceived that the ever increasing popularity of the Guru was dangerous to their position as the rulers of the region. So, they and especially the Raja of Bilaspur wanted to devise some plan to oust the Guru from Anandpur.



## **14. The Creation of The Khalsa**

The tenth Guru had found that the hill chiefs were dispirited, demoralised, terror stricken and devoid of any national feeling. He found them incapable of presenting a united front against the tyrannical rule of the Emperor, Aurangzeb. He had also seen that the Masands had lost their piety, integrity and were morally degenerated. He had the knowledge how to escape from the cruelty of the Emperor, the Sikhs of Delhi had concealed their identity, when Guru Teg Bahadur courted martyrdom at Delhi. No doubt, the institution of Langar had mitigated the prejudice of castes to a great extent, but the Guru wanted to remove the caste barriers altogether making the four castes to lose their separate identity and merge into one caste, the Khalsa. To infuse new life into dead bones, to infuse national spirit into the masses, to give a distinct identity to his followers and to bring about sweeping changes both socially and morally into the lives of ordinary people, the Guru decided to do something of a revolutionary nature. He recognised all human beings as members of the same stock (human race). He bore no ill will against any faith, still he wanted his followers to be distinct and different from those who followed the Hindu or the Muslim faith. He, thus sought the blessings of God (Almighty) to help him in his endeavour to introduce his 'Panth' into the world.

Baisakhi day since long had been an important day in the lives of Sikhs. On this day, they used to visit their Guru to seek his blessings. But the Baisakhi day of 1699 AD. has its special significance. On that auspicious day, a miraculous event enacted on the sacred soil of Anandpur had the far reaching effects on the course of the History of Punjab, nay that of even India.

The Guru had enjoined upon his Sikhs, to reach Anandpur in large number on the festival of Baisakhi. They began to swarm at the town of Anandpur even days in advance of the Baisakhi. A day before the Baisakhi of 1699 A.D, the Guru held a big 'diwan' in an open space near the fort of Kesgarh. The

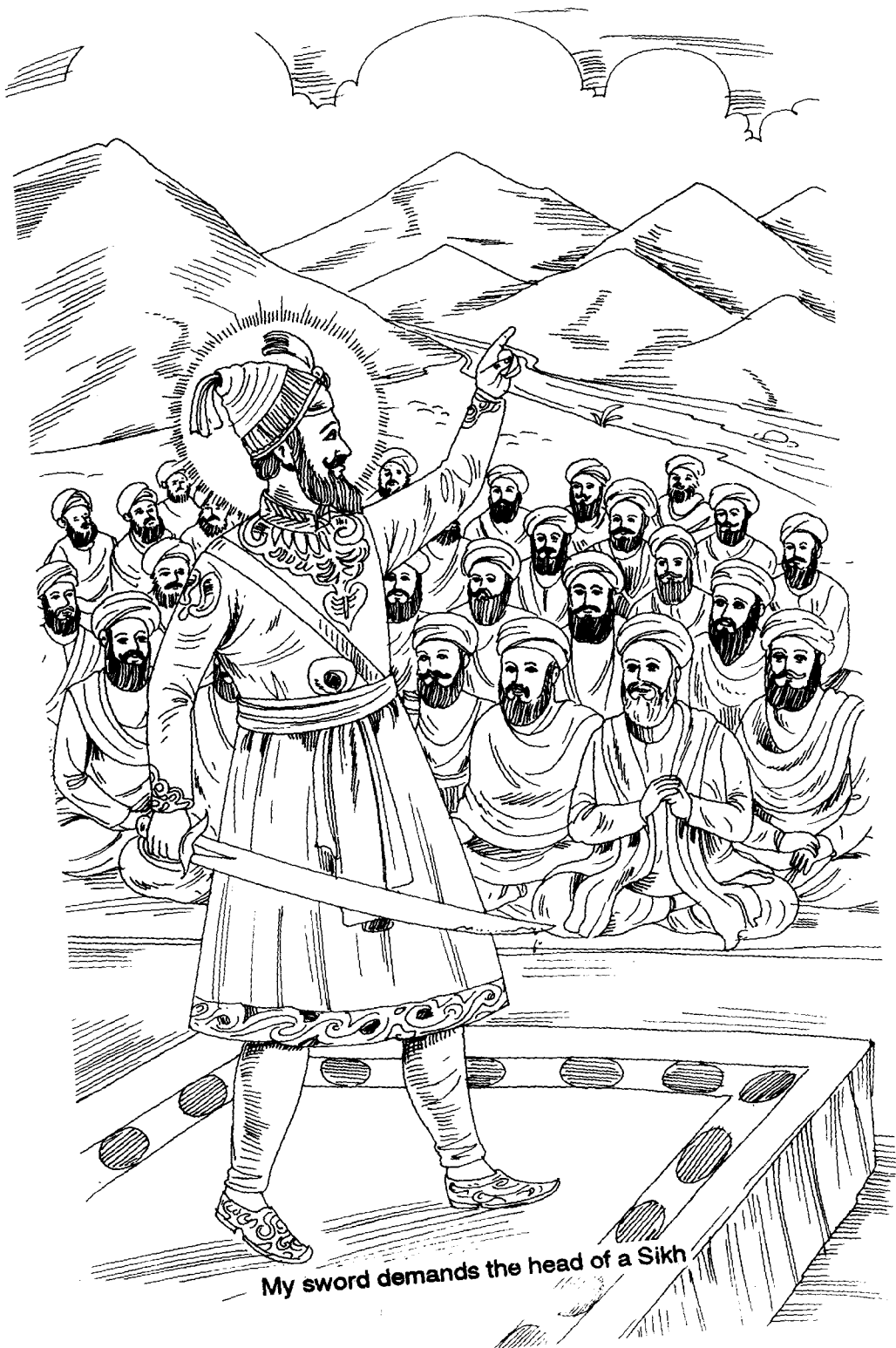
Sikhs had assembled there in large numbers. The Guru was on his seat listening to the divine kirtan. He was holding an arrow in his hand. After the morning prayers, he put the arrow into the quiver, unsheathed his sword and stood up to address the assembly. A moment before it he was calm and serene; but now his face was flushing with excitement an indication to the zeal of his mind.

He brandished his sword in the air and in a loud voice said, "This sword of mine wants the head of a Sikh. Is there anyone among you, who is ready to offer his head to my sword? It was a strange demand. For a moment there was dead silence. As it was an amazing demand so the Sikhs were at a loss to comprehend what the Guru meant. For a short while, there was no response to the Guru's call. He repeated his call: His face was hard set. His eyes were shining like fire. For the third time he raised his voice and loudly said, "Is there any of my Sikh who forsaking his love for life, offers his head to my sword"?

Bhai Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore rose from his seat, walked to the Guru and said, "O, true king, I offer to you my head. Cut it off. I lay down my life at your altar."

The Guru held Daya Ram by the arm and dragged him into the tent. The sound of the blow of sword was heard. A stream of blood was seen running out of the tent. The audience thought that Daya Ram had been killed.

After a while the Guru came out of the tent. His sword was dripping blood. Brandishing his blood red sword in the air, he again in a thundering voice said, "Is there another true Sikh to sacrifice his head?" Again dead silence prevailed there. The Guru repeated his call. There was no response. For the third time in a thundering voice he said, "My sword needs the blood of another faithful Sikh. Come forward and offer your head to my sword." Bhai Dharam Chand a Jat of Delhi stood up and went to the Guru. He said, "My true lord! Ever since I became your Sikh I have devoted the whole of myself to you. It is your property. If you need my head, it is at your disposal, cut it off from my body. I place it at your feet." The Guru took Bhai Dharam Chand along with him into the tent. Again the Sikhs



heard the sound of the blow of sword and then the falling of a body. Again fresh blood was seen draining out of the tent. The gathering of the Sikhs felt convinced, that he, too, had been killed like the first Sikh, Daya Ram.

A short time after, the Guru came out of the tent. His looks were fiercer. His face was redder. He brandished his blood dripping sword in the air and appealed for another head. Again there was an awe inspiring silence among the audience. He repeated his call and in a loud voice, said, "I want another head to satiate the thirst of my sword. Is there any Sikh of mine, who offers his head to my sword"? At the third call of the Guru, Bhai Mohkam Chand, a washerman from Dwarka (Gujrat) came forward and said, "O, true king, I place my head at your feet, cut it and let it roll round your feet," The Guru treated him in the same manner as he had treated the first two heroes. Again the sound of blow was heard and the stream of blood was seen flowing out of the tent.

The Sikhs sitting there thought that the third Sikh too, had met with the fate of the first two. A sense of fear shadowed the audience. More and more of them started slipping away from the scene making the gathering thinner in number. Some of the Masands approached Mata Gujri. They apprised her of the strange behaviour of the Guru. They said, "The Guru is under the influence of the goddess. That is the reason why he has been performing the unsavoury act of killing his own Sikhs. He has lost his balance of mind. We pray you to stop him and instead install one of your grandsons on the gurgaddi." She sent a messenger to desist him from killing the Sikhs, but the Guru did not listen to the messenger.

The devoted Sikhs had an unshakable faith in their Guru. They could not imagine that their Guru could go wrong. They kept sitting there, where as the less courageous and shaky among them had run away from the scene.

The Guru again came out of the tent with the blood dripping sword in his hand. Again in a thundering voice he gave a call, "My sword is still unsatiated. It demands another head. Who will come forward to offer his head"? Some more Sikhs lost

heart and slipped away from the Sangat. When the Guru repeated his demand of a head for the third time, Bhai Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar (Karnatka) stood up from the congregation and went to the Guru. He said, "I am ready to be beheaded by your sword. I shall feel elevated if by laying down my life, I serve you."

The Guru treated him in the same manner as he had treated the other three brave men. The Sikh congregation presumed that another Sikh had been killed. Again they (the Sikhs) saw fresh blood running out of the tent.

The Guru reappeared out of the tent. His sword was dripping blood. His eyes were shining like fire. His face was red indicating the zeal of his mind. He repeated the same appeal to his Sikhs saying, "My sword is still thirsty. It requires the head of another faithful Sikh. Who will volunteer himself to be beheaded by my sword"?

This time Bhai Himmat Rai, a water carrier of Jagan Nath Puri (Orissa) came forward to offer his head. He was taken inside the tent. Again the sound of a blow of sword was heard. The Sikhs saw the stream of fresh blood coming out of the tent.

This time the Guru remained inside the tent for a longer time. When he came out, he was followed by the five brave men in saffron coloured attires. His sword was sheathed. His beaming face was radiating the smile of satisfaction, an indication to the realisation of some cherished aim. He was highly pleased with the five brave men for their heroic devotion and self sacrifice.

The audience were wonder-struck to find the five brave men all alive and hale and hearty. All the Sikhs present there felt ashamed at their cowardly behaviour. They felt remorse for themselves for having not made a voluntary offering of their heads at the calls of their Guru. A number of them, then requested the Guru to cut off their heads saying, "We are sorry, we kept waiting for our turns, and thus lagged behind." The Guru consoled them saying, "You are brave and devoted, that

is why you stuck to the ground whence the fickle and the unsteady have run away."

The Guru, then, seated the five brave men near him. He told the audience that he was immensely pleased at the outcome of the test. He said, "Guru Nanak found only one Sikh Guru Angad to stand his test successfully. I have my 'beloved five' who have gloriously cleared the most difficult test. It is a good and promising Omen. It assures the growth and success of the Khalsa. The five heroes are the Panch Piaras, my beloved five. They are in my form. They are one with me. I am in them, they are in me."

On the following day fell the auspicious day of Baisakhi. That day the gathering was even larger than it was a day before. The Sikhs had thronged to the venue near the Gurdwara Sri Kesgarh Sahib from all over the country. More than eighty thousand Sikhs had assembled to seek the blessings of their Guru, to listen to his word of wisdom and to receive his command for the course, they were to adopt in future.

The Guru came into the Darbar along with his beloved five Ones. He was dressed all in white. His face was radiating brilliance reflecting the cheerfulness of his mind. He took his seat on the throne. The beloved five sat near him in the first row. The audience were curiously waiting to witness what an astonishing deed the Guru would do that day.

The Guru rose from his seat, came forward to address the gathering. He said, "To day I am going to do something that will bring revolutionary changes into the lives of my Sikhs. It will have the power to infuse fresh zeal and new spirit into the dead souls. It will arouse the dormant energies of the people. It will kindle in them the courage to face the enemy of faith relentlessly. It will transform the coward jackals into bold and daring lions. It will make the meek sparrows capable of fighting against the hawks. It will remove the caste barriers and strengthen the brotherhood of the Sikhs, making them all members of one Caste, the Khalsa. I am going to make out of you a force of invincible fighting men before whom the oppressors will tremble with fear and the innocents seek their protec-

tion. To day, I will create the Khalsa out of you by giving you the nectar of immortality."

The Guru, then, took a steel vessel and filled it with some pure water. He told the beloved five to stand around him and repeat Waheguru, fixing their mind on God and eyes on him. He, himself, sat beside the vessel of steel and started stirring the water in it with a 'Khanda' (a two edged sword). While doing so he went on reciting the sacred verses of Gurbani chosen for the occasion out of Adi Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth Sahib. When he completed the ceremonies related to the preparation of Amrit he said, "I have prepared Amrit or the baptismal nectar. It has the potentials of making the sparrows fight against the falcons." Right at that time Guru's wife Mata Jito Ji reached there carrying Patashas (Indian sweetmeat) in her scarf. She said, "I, too, want to have my contribution to the Amrit." Saying so, she poured the patashas into the Amrit. The Guru said, "You have arrived at a very appropriate time. Your contribution has sweetened the Amrit. Now those who drink it will be fearless and brave like lions; but at the same time at heart they will remain peace loving and sweet tempered."

The Guru had prepared the Amrit. He, then made each of the Beloved Five sit in a particular posture with his left leg up to knee fully bent backwards and the frontal part of knee touching the ground, while the right foot placed on the ground in a normal position. Each one of them was asked to repeat Mulmantra after him for five times. Then they were told to look into his eyes. The Guru himself gazed into the eyes of each of the Beloved five turn by turn. He, then threw showers of Amrit (baptismal nectar) five times into Dear one's face. At each shower, he called upon the Dear one to say aloud, "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Sri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh."

This new slogan (Bola) was pronounced for the first time by the Guru. Nectar, was then sprinkled over the hair and the eyes 'of Dear Ones' five times. At the receipt of each shower the Dear one would pronounce loudly Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Sri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh. After this the Guru told the Beloved five



Mata Jito Ji pouring patashas into the Amrit



to drink some of the nectar from the steel vessel turn by turn till the whole of it had been drunk.

Then the Guru said, "I have baptised you to become the members of the Brotherhood of Singhs. You have been given the appellation of Singh. Now you are no longer Daya Ram, Dharam Chand, Mohkam Chand, Sahib Chand and Himat Rai, but you have become Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh. Any one who takes the Amrit will become a Singh (a lion). His name will have the ending word of Singh with it. You have now become the members of Khalsa Brotherhood losing your previous caste distinctions. Henceforth your caste will be Khalsa and you will be under the direct control and protection of God. As the members of Khalsa you are to follow some rules of conduct which constitutes 'the Reht' for a Singh:-Every Singh or the member of Khalsa brotherhood shall observe wearing five articles whose names start with the letter 'K' ( ) namely Kes (uncut hair) Kangha (a comb) Kirpan (a sword) Kara (a steel bracelet) and Kachhera (a short drawers) A Singh must abstain himself from the use of tobacco in its any form. He should worship and believe in only one God. He should never worship idols cemeteries or cremation grounds. He should lead an honest and truthful life consisting of honest earnings, sharing of his income with the needy and meditating on the name of God. A Singh should rise early in the morning, bathe and cleanse himself, recite Gurbani and attend to his daily business. He should not believe in caste distinctions. The new salutation among the Singhs shall be Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Sri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh. (The Lord's is the Khalsa Lord's be the victory.) He (The Singh) should use his sword for the protection of weak and the destruction of tyrannicals."

The Beloved Five took vows to adhere to the 'Reht' maryada prescribed by the Guru for a Singh.

After initiating the beloved five into the Khalsa creed, the Guru asked them to prepare the Amrit and baptise him in the manner, he had baptised them. The beloved five could not imagine to make the Guru their disciple, as they regarded him

the greatest of prophets. Finding them hesitants he said, "I have granted my Khalsa, the same privileges as enjoyed by the Guru. The Guru does not claim higher privileges than those of the Khalsa. So, baptise me and make me a Singh, as I have done to you."

The beloved five, then, prepared the Amrit. They followed the same procedure as was followed by the Guru and baptised the Guru, thus making him Singh. He was made to take the same vows regarding the observance of the 'Reht' prescribed by him for a Khalsa. His name was likewise, changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. Thus was born the Khalsa on the sacred soil of Anandpur on the Baisakhi day of 1699 AD. Really it was an event which was revolutionary and path breaking in its character.

The baptising ceremonies continued for a number of days. As many as twenty thousand Sikhs took the 'Pahul of Khanda' and were initiated to become the members of the Khalsa brotherhood.

## **15. Guru Gobind Singh And The Hill Chiefs**

The news about the creation of the Khalsa travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country. It reached the ears of Emperor Aurangzeb. Anandpur being the part of the territory of Bilaspur, Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur was among the firsts to feel apprehension from the growth of revolutionary crop in his neighbourhood. He called the other Rajas of the region to Bilaspur and apprised them of the danger to their rules if they remained indifferent towards the activities of the newly formed Khalsa. He reminded them of the severe punishment they had been subjected to by the imperial troops of Prince Mauzam. He warned them that they would again be provoking the wrath of the Emperor if they kept themselves to the role of mere passive spectators to the activities of the Guru and his Khalsa which should be taken as a potential menace to their existence as rulers. He said, they should regard the ever increasing military prowess of the Guru with the seriousness it deserved.

As they had tasted the steel of his sword in the battle of Bhangani and then in many more occasional skirmishes, they concluded that they could do him no harm if they fought against him with out the help of the Mughal troops. As they did not anticipate immediate action from Aurangzeb who was busy subjugating the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, they thought it prudent to keep outwardly good relations with the Guru for the time being. But in the heart of their hearts they were against the Guru.

Consequently Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur along with some other Rajas visited the Guru at Anandpur. They were received with due courtesy at the Guru Darbar. During the meeting the Guru exhorted the Rajas to form a joint front against the oppressive and intolerant rule of the Emperor and remove the yoke of slavery from their necks. He reminded the Rajas that they should honour the glorious legacy of their ancestors. He tried to kindle their sagged spirits for bold actions; but the centuries of perpetual subjection to the foreign

rule had made the Raja's completely demoralised, and devoid of any initiative' to enter upon a struggle for liberty. The devastation caused by the soldiers of Prince Muazam was still fresh in their minds. They could not release their minds of the terror planted in their hearts by the Mughal and Pathan soldiers. They said to the Guru in a pessimistic tone, "We are no match against the mighty Mughals and Pathans. Each member of them can consume the whole goat in one sitting. They have their sway right from Turkistan to India covering most of the Asian countries. The sun of the Mughal power in India is at its zenith. To rise in rebellion against all powerful rule is like inviting death and destruction. It will not be less than a suicidal act on our part to venture on this course. We should rather remain content with what we possess than face annihilation."

The Guru suggested to them, "Take the 'Pahul' of Khanda and join the Brotherhood of Khalsa. It will errace away all signs of fear from your minds. Instead you will become capable of striking your fear into the minds of dreaded Mughals and Pathans. It will provide you with the courage to fall down the hawks of Mughal army with your sparrows.

The hill chiefs were too dejected to revive their sagged spirits. They said to the Guru, "We admit, you can bring about miracles; but we are ordinary beings, orthodox in our beliefs and convictions. We believe in caste distinctions. We cannot appreciate the idea of an even society which Khalsa represents. It is quite a spiteful act for us to sit with the low caste people and partake our food with them. We can neither dine with low caste people nor can we treat them equal ignoring the fact that we belong to high lineage of 'Agni kund' Rajputs. So we cannot accept your proposal to join the Khalsa creed, an amalgam of the low caste people."

The Raja s did not approve the innovations being brought about by the Guru. Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur was more jealous of the Guru for his popularity than the other chiefs. He was also apprehensive of the Guru's military practices. He wanted to keep himself well informed of the Guru's activities and know his secrets. For this purpose he suggested to the

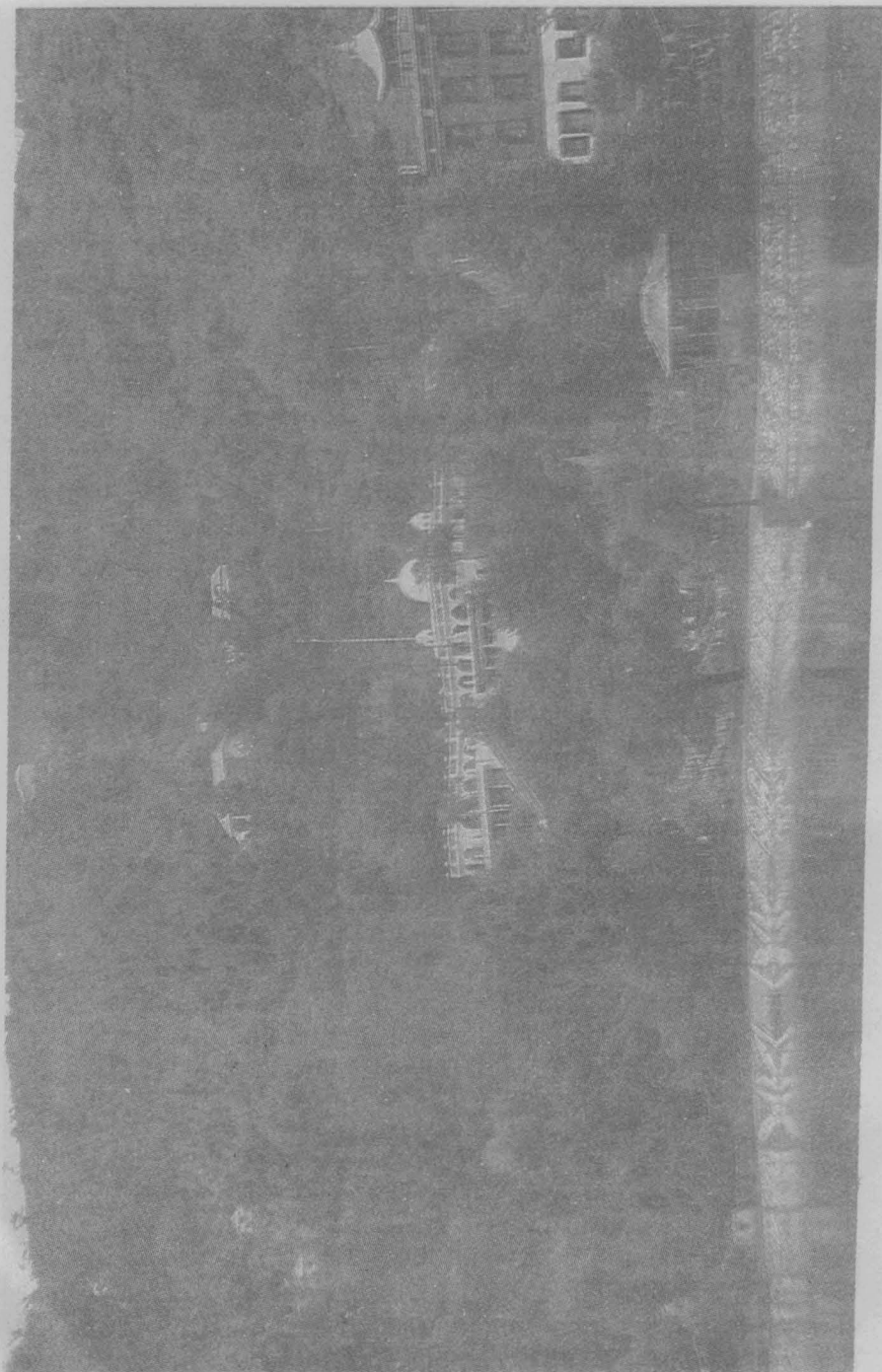
Guru to accept his ambassador at his court. The Guru did not object to the proposal. Thus, the Raja sent a Brahman named Pamma as his envoy to the Guru's Darbar. The duties assigned to Pamma were more of a spy than those of an ambassador. He was to pass the secrets of the Guru to the Raja.

Rawalsar is an ancient place of pilgrimage near Mandi. There is a beautiful lake of clear water with a number of floating isles adding the charms of the already beautiful surroundings. The presence of an ancient Shiva temple and the Buddhist monastery on the banks of the lake stand as proofs that the site might have remained the favourite abode of the saints and the holy men for their religious activities and meditations. As Rawalsar was a place of pilgrimage bearing religious sanctity, it attracted large number of pilgrims every year on the eve of Baisakhi festival. It had almost become customary for the Rajas to pay their visit to Rawalsar every year during the Baisakhi festival.

One day, probably, at the instance of his master, 'Pamma suggested to the Guru to go to Rawsalsar. He added that the visit would provide the Guru an opportunity to have heart to heart talks with the Rajas, thereby leading to cementing friendly relations with them.

The Guru earnestly desired to live in peace with the hill chiefs, so he readily accepted Pamma's suggestion, thinking that the Rajas would listen to his advice of forming a joint front against the Mughal rule. He took with him the members of his family and also a company of his Sikh soldiers and proceeded to Rawalsar.

All the hill chiefs had gathered there. They accorded magnificent reception to the Guru. Shamianas signifying royal grandeur were put up for his stay. The Rajas along with their families visited him to pay their respect. The members of chief's families were greatly impressed by the charming manners of the Guru. The Rajas also begged him to forget and forgive their past offences against him. The Guru exhorted them to come into the Khalsa fold and wage a war against the oppressors for the welfare of the common folk. But the Raja expressed their



Gurdwara Rawalsar Mandi (H.F)

views saying that they were content with what they had and that they did not like venturing into the unsurmountable task of throwing challenge to the Mughal's might.

The Guru stayed at Rawalsar for a number of days. He held his religious assemblies for morning and evening prayers. Large number of people attended the prayer sessions and benefitted themselves by enriching their souls with spiritual food and peace giving Gurbani.

The wives of the Rajas also came to see the Guru and hear his word of wisdom. They were received in a separate tent. As the Ranis showed more interest into the manly charms of the Guru's personality by looking at him with deep admiration; than to listen to the divine sermons, he advised the eldest of the queens to depart. She prevailed upon the Ranis to terminate their visit much against their wishes.

The Raja of Chamba had in his heart great regard for the Guru. He had a sagacious daughter named Padma, who was well versed to the world of literature and the philosophical ideology of the time. She got permission of her father to write a letter to the Guru prior to meeting him to ascertain if the Guru could comprehend the metaphorical expressions and provide the solution to her puzzle. She wrote one and sent it to the Guru through a servant.

The Guru sent back the answer of the metaphorical puzzle to the satisfaction of the princess. She, then, went to see the Guru. She bowed before the Guru to pay her obeisance. The Guru patted her on the shoulder with his arrow. She said to the Guru, "I am your devotee. I expect you to bless me by patting my back with your hand." The Guru told her that he never touched any woman other than his wife with his hands. The princess was deeply impressed. She bowed to the Guru showing her deep reverence and went away.

One day, the Guru was holding his magnificent Darbar. Many devotees and the armed Sikh soldiers were present there. The hill chiefs too were also camping not very far from the Guru's Darbar. Dula Singh a devout Sikh artisan of Frak-

habad came to the Guru and presented him with some weapons of war including a double barrelled gun. The Guru wanted to test the effectiveness of the gun's shot on a target. He asked his Sikhs, "Who will come forward and stand at a distance of hundred yards to become the target of my shot." A race started among the Sikhs. Every one wanted to stand as target for the Guru aim. Seeing their eagerness, the Guru ordered them to stand in a row one after another so that he could test the striking power of the gun by firing a shot. The Rajas were surprisingly amused to see how the Sikhs volunteered themselves to risk their lives at the Guru's bidding. The futility of entertaining the hope of defeating the Guru who had so devotional following at his command had now been obviously revealed on them. The Guru, however, fired a shot in such a manner that the bullet crossed over the heads of the Sikhs without hitting any of them.

While the Guru was still camping at Rawalsar, the Raja of Mandi invited him to visit his state. The Guru accepted his invitation. He stayed at Kamalgarh fort as the guest of the Raja. The Raja served the Guru with all sincerity. He shared the hospitality of the Raja for a few days and then after visiting many villages on the way came back to Anandpur.



## **16. The Surprise Attack On the Hunting Party**

The fact, that he could not defeat the Guru on the battle field, had fully dawned upon Raja Ajmer Chand. But as the fire of enmity towards the Guru was still smouldering in his heart, he resorted to kill the Guru adopting deceptive measures, contrary to the tenets of chivalry. His plan was to kill the Guru during his hunting excursions. He was aware of the fact that only a small number of Sikhs accompanied him on his hunting games. In order to dupe the Guru into his trap, he had stationed sufficient troops under the commands of two chiefs Balia Chand and Alim Chand in the thick jungle. They had the instructions to attack the Guru at the first available opportunity.

The Sikh soldiers had become very bold and they had started over-estimating their striking power. Often, they would say to the Guru if he allowed them they could fall upon Delhi. The Guru appreciated their high spirited boldness, but at the same time he despised vanity. He wanted to see his Sikhs bold but humble at heart. He thus decided to impart them a practical lesson that would, reveal upon them to visualise their prowess themselves.

One day, he along with a small company of Sikhs set out on his hunting excursion. He took along with him only Udai Singh and Alam Singh, the two brave leaders and their soldiers. During the game of chase they got separated.

In pursuit of his game the Guru left the main body. Balia Chand and Alam Chand found the Sikhs scattered here and there in search of game. It was a golden opportunity for them to fall upon the Sikhs, who were unaware of their presence there. They called out their armies and cautiously marched to encircle a group of Sikhs, who unmindful of this development were busy in their game of chase. Balia Chand made a sudden attack on Udai Singh and his men. The Sikhs were taken by surprise, but they stood to the ground and cut down a number of hillmen. But soon they realised that it was an unequal fight. Alam Singh and his men when learnt of the surprise attack.

rushed to support Udai Singh and his soldiers. They killed some soldiers of the attackers. Seeing that the hillmen were being killed in greater number, Alim Chand fiercely attacked the Sikhs. Soon the Sikhs realised that they would not stick to the ground against the superior number of the attackers. So a Sikh went in search of the Guru to inform him of the surprise attack of the hillmen. He found the Guru and told him that they would not be able to withstand the forceful charge of the hillmen without his help.

The Guru then took his position on a hillock and raised his cry of Sat, Sri Akal. Hearing the war cry of the Guru, the retreating Sikhs felt in them fresh zeal to fight. In spite of the pressure of the attackers, the retreating Sikhs had not let their ranks broken down. Now thinking that the Guru was at their back, they fought vehemently.

The Guru discharged his arrows which never missed the targets. Whosoever was struck, met his end. Soon there were heaps of the fallen soldiers on the ground. Alam Chand got furious to see such a huge loss of his men. He made a frontal attack on Alam Singh with his sword. Though it was the most forceful blow of sword yet Alam Singh received it on his shield. Then in his return blow, he severed the right arm of the hill leader which fell along with his sword on the ground. Alam Chand, then, thought it better to save his skin than to face sure death. He fled away from the field.

Balia Chand and his men were engaged fighting against Udai Singh and his soldiers. With the flight of Alam Chand the confidence and the courage of the Sikh soldiers gained strength whereas the hillmen lost their courage to fight. Udai Singh aimed a blow of his sword on Balia Chand, which the latter could not check. It killed him.

The death of Balia Chand made the hill men panic stricken as one of their commanders Alam Chand had already fled away from the field losing his right arm. Finding the hill men confused, the Sikhs made a swooping charge and trounced them. They ran away in utter confusion to save their lives.

Thus inspite of the surprise attack and their superior fighting strength, the Sikhs had battered the hillmen in the fight. But this fact had become obviously known to them that they could win battles with the blessings of their Guru, who with all his powers was humble at heart and never feel proud of his competence and that he wanted his Sikhs powerful but free from vanity.

## **17. The First Battle of Anandpur (1701 A.D)**

The Khalsa was rapidly gaining its strength. People from all over the country were reaching to Anandpur to join the Brotherhood of Khalsa by taking the Pahul of Kanda, thereby increasing the number of the dedicated persons ready to sacrifice their lives for the Guru's cause. For the hill chiefs it was a menacing development threatening their status as rulers. They did not approve the principles of democratic equality, the abolition of caste prejudices, the equality of privileges and the common baptism for all classes propounded and practised by the Guru. They had the fear that the Guru and his Khalsa was sure to deprive them of their privileges and status as members of high lineage and the ruling class. In addition to it the Sikhs would ransack their territories and plundered the villages in retaliation to not very uncommon skirmishes between the Khalsa and the soldiers of Raja of Bilaspur. In order to drive out the Guru from Anandpur, the hill chiefs formed an alliance against the Guru under the leadership of the Raja of Bilaspur.

The town of Anandpur formed the part of the territories of Bilaspur. Treating the Guru as if he were his subject, the Raja demanded the Guru either to vacate Anandpur or pay rent to him. As the land of the town was purchased by his father against payment, the Guru did not oblige the Raja by acceding to his demand. As for the rent it had never been paid to that date and so the Guru refused to pay it treating it as an unjust demand.

In order to kill the Guru or forced him to leave the town, the hill chiefs planned an attack on him with a strong force of 8000 troops. The attackers besieged the town of Anandpur and blocked all the entry and exit points linking the town with the outside world. The siege continued for several days without giving any advantage to the besiegers. As no tangible result was in sight, the chiefs suggested to the Guru to leave Anandgarh (fort) temporarily, so that they could save their

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honour against the disgrace of their defeat. They swore on cow that they would do no harm to the Guru and his Sikhs.

Accepting their suggestion the Guru, then shifted to Nirmoh, a village near Kiratpur. But he was again attacked there by the Raja of Bilaspur. The battle lasted for a day and the attackers were beaten back. The Raja of Basaoli invited the Guru to stay at Basaoli : He accepted the invitation and went there. There again the Raja of Bilaspur attacked him in the hope that he would force the Guru to flee to the plains but his soldiers were defeated with severe slaughter by the Sikhs. The Guru stayed at Basaoli for sometime. As the Raja had again suffered a defeat, he made peace with the Guru. The Guru, then came back to Anandpur.

## 1 8. Bhai Ghanaiya



Bhai Ghanaiya on his service mission

Bhai Ghanaiya, who had on him the blessings of the Guru, was an embodiment of devotional service. He was a resident of Sodra, a village in the district of Gujranwala (Pakistan). Bhai Nathu Ram and Sundri ji, the parents of Bhai Ghanaiya were the devout Sikhs of Guru Teg Bahadur. He was born to them in 1648 A.D. Once when his parents visited Anandpur to pay their regards to the Guru, they had taken along with them their young son Ghanaiya also.

At Anandpur Ghanaiya was deeply impressed by the doctrine of selfless service preached by the Sikh Gurus. It got planted into his young heart. He, thus, resolved to dedicate his whole being into the service of the Guru and the Sangat. Sweeping of floors, cleansing of utensils, drawing and carrying of water and serving food and water to the sangat became part of his daily routine. He also attended the prayer sessions. There he not only listened to the Guru's words of wisdom, but also adapted himself to live according to the spirit of those wise words.

Bhai Ghanaiya had been living at Anandpur since the time of Guru Teg Behadur. Under Guru Gobind Singh jee, thousands of Sikhs had taken Amrit and became saint soldiers before the very eyes of Bhai Ghanaiya, but he did not take Amrit to enter upon the career of a valiant Singh. The figuration of his activities was different from the one practised by the chivalrous Khalsa soldiers. Guru Gobind Singh jee spared certain Sikhs from becoming active Khalsas. One such example was Bhai Nand Lal. He was a poet par-excellence, a highly learned and literary figure. He was a devout Sikh ever ready to lay down his life for his master, (the Guru) who to him was the treasure house of all virtues and the king of the kings. But the Guru did not baptise him. Bhai Mani Singh, a highly revered and learned Sikh was although baptised; yet he was entrusted with the duties of religious nature. He was assigned the task of preaching the Sikh faith. Similarly Bhai Ghanaiya, who was a man of peaceful disposition, tender at heart and compassionate by nature, was advised to carry on his mission of service. He was not a timid man to get scared from the din of war, instead he

would invariably move about into the battle field carrying on his back (Mushk) leathern water bag and serving water to the wounded soldiers and also extending whatever help he could provide to the wounded and sick soldiers.

In 1704 A.D. Anandpur was attacked by the combined armies of the Mughals, and the hill chiefs. Rangars and Gujjars also joined them to augment their strength. The Khalsa fought vehemently against them.

Fierce fighting went on throughout the day. Both sides suffered large casualties in dead and wounded. Bhai Ghanaiya, as usual, kept moving about with his leathern water bag into the battle field, serving water to the wounded soldiers, unmindful of the fact whether they were friends or foes.

At the conclusion of the day's fighting, some Sikh soldiers approached the Guru and complained that Bhai Ghanaiya was doing great dis-service to the Guru. They said, "O, true king, we fight vehemently with all our might to cause the Turks and the hillmen fall dead or wounded, but wherever in the battle field, Bhai Ghanaiya sees a wounded or unconscious soldier, he immediately rushes there to serve water to him and also provides help to him to regain his consciousness and strength. His improper service helps the enemy's soldiers to recover and start a fresh fight against us. Kindly desist him from helping the Turks. In a way he is undoing, what we achieve through hard fight."

On hearing the complaint against Bhai Ghanaiya, the Guru immediately sent a Sikh to bring him in his presence. Soon he came back along with Bhai Ghanaiya who was carrying leathern water bag on his back. He was also holding the white banner in his left hand.

The Guru asked him "Bhai Ghanaiya, do you know what the Sikhs say about you? Do you give water to the wounded soldiers of the enemy? Do you help them to recover their fighting strength"?

Hearing the Guru's words, Bhai Ghanaiya knelt down. He folded his hands and said, "True king, I have never served



water or given any sort of help to any enemy. My brothers might have been mistaken." Before letting Bhai Ghanaiya complete his statement the aggrieved Sikhs got furious and cried out, "True king, he is a liar. Do not believe him. We are not mistaken. It is he who is denying having acted against your interests. We saw him serving water to the enemy's soldiers."

The Guru silenced the agitated Sikhs and suggested to them to let Bhai Ghanaiya complete his statement and explain what he had done in the battle field.

Bhai Ghanaiya, then, stated, "True king! I poured every drop of water into your mouth. How could I perceive who was your friend or foe when I was serving you alone and none else. I looked upon the wounded soldiers not as Turks or Sikhs, but persons in need of help. My Lord! Your wise words, that Hindus or Turks be regarded as the members of the same stock, the mankind, have been deeply engraved on my heart. O True King, I act according to your teachings. I do not serve water to the Turks or to an enemy; but conceiving your image in each and every person, I do a little bit in distributing your given gift of the milk of human kindness among the wounded soldiers by serving water to them. Now if it is an offence and against your precepts, do punish me. I plead you not to forgive me for my guilt."

The complaining Sikhs then, realised that Bhai Ghanaiya had adapted in him the true spirit of a Gur-Sikh. They felt as if they had committed a sin by lodging a complaint against such a Gur-Sikh. However, the Guru, comforted the repenting minds of the Sikhs saying, "Your complaint too, was, genuine. It was quite natural for you to get angry when you found a vanquished combatant had been helped to restart fighting against you."

The Guru praised Bhai Ghanaiya for his adaption of the true spirit of a Gur-Sikh. He gave him a pot of ointment and advised him, "Carry on your good work. Now onwards you should, also dress the wounds of the fallen wounded soldiers and apply this ointment for the fast healing of their wounds" He accepted the ointment, bowed and placed his head on Guru's feet and then

went away to carry on his mission of service to the people irrespective of the consideration who they were.

When the Guru left Anandpur, Bhai Ghanaiya got separated from the Guru. He came back to his village and absorbed himself there into service and meditation. When he heard that the Guru had reached Talwandi Sabo, he also reached there and again dedicated himself in the service of the Guru and the Sangat.

When the Guru started his journey towards Deccan, Bhai Ghanaiya came back to his village. He lived there for some years, always engrossed into service to the people and the preaching of the Sikh faith. On 20th of September 1718, Bhai Ji was sitting with Sangat listening to the divine kirtan of Gurbani and pleasantly experiencing its soothing effect on his mind. In such a composure he went into trance and breathed his last.

## **19. Bhai Bachittar Singh**

The baptism of 'Amrit' had changed the Sikhs into Singhs. They became the fearless lions to stand against the mightiest combatants, be they men (soldiers) or beasts, (elephants). Always maintaining themselves in high spirits, literally a single Singh had the courage to challenge a legion of a lakh and a quarter. The daring feats of the Singhs are the valuable assets for the nation to feel proud of them. The story of Bhai Bachittar Singh, successfully facing the ferocious elephant sent by the hill chiefs depicts the valour of the Singh.

Bhai Bachittar Singh was the resident of Alipur District Multan (Pakistan). He was the eldest of the five sons of Bhai Mani Ram, a Rajput. Bhai Mani Ram came to Anandpur along with his five sons and sought Guru's blessings. The five brothers took Amrit and were named as Bachittar Singh, Udai Singh, Anik Singh, Ajaib Singh and Ajab Singh. Pleased with them for their devotion and muscular physiques, the Guru would fondly call them 'Sturdy five Pandovs.'

The hill chiefs had become the sworn enemies of the Guru. In spite of their repeated defeats at the hands of the Guru, they had not reconciled to live in peace with him. Instead to kill or oust the Guru from the region had become their main concern.

They made vigorous preparations to attack the Guru. They were supported by the Rangars and the Gujjars of the region in their nefarious design of attacking him. They laid the siege of Anandpur. For their defence the main body of the Sikhs soldiers, took their positions inside the Lohgarh fort; however a contingent of them made their defence post at Agampura to check the advance of the attackers.

Fierce fighting went on during the day. The Sikhs, fired gun shots and rained arrows from the ramparts of the fort on the attacking forces. The Sikhs fighting at the defence post also put up a good resistance.

In the evening after the day's battle, the Guru was informed that the attackers had planned to storm the fort the following

morning. He was told that Raja Kesari Chand Jasswaria would send a ferocious and drunken elephant to knock down the gate of the fort and then they would made an assault to enter the fort.

The Guru pondered over the gravity of the situation for a while. He perceived that the fall of the fort gate could lead to undesirable development. He must not let it happen. He, then, looked at his Singhs who were present there and remarked, "One of my Singh would perforate the fore-head of the elephant and drove him backwards. Meanwhile the contingent of twenty five presonal body- guards of the Guru arrived for night duty. They paid their respect to the Guru and made themselves stand infront of him. The Guru viewed each of those sturdy Sikhs and then declared, "My lion, Bachittar Singh would face the drunken elephant." Bhai Bachittar Singhcame forward. He bowed to the Guru and then thanked him for recognising him suitable for the cause.

The Guru patted his back, and gave him a rare spear, which had a large steel blade with sharp, but hard tip. Bachittar Singh was also given a fine horse. He was given certain instructions and was asked to move to Lohgarh fort.

Alam Singh suggested to the Guru, "You should sent a sturdy and perfectly trained horseman who could make a swoop at Raja Kesari Chand, at the time when Bachittar Singh would be facing the elephant." Bhai Udai Singh volunteered himself asserting that with the Guru's blessing he would cross every hurdle to make a sudden attack on the Raja. The Guru approved the proposal. He, then explained to the leaders his scheme, as to how they would face the attackers and alloted to each of them his station of operation.

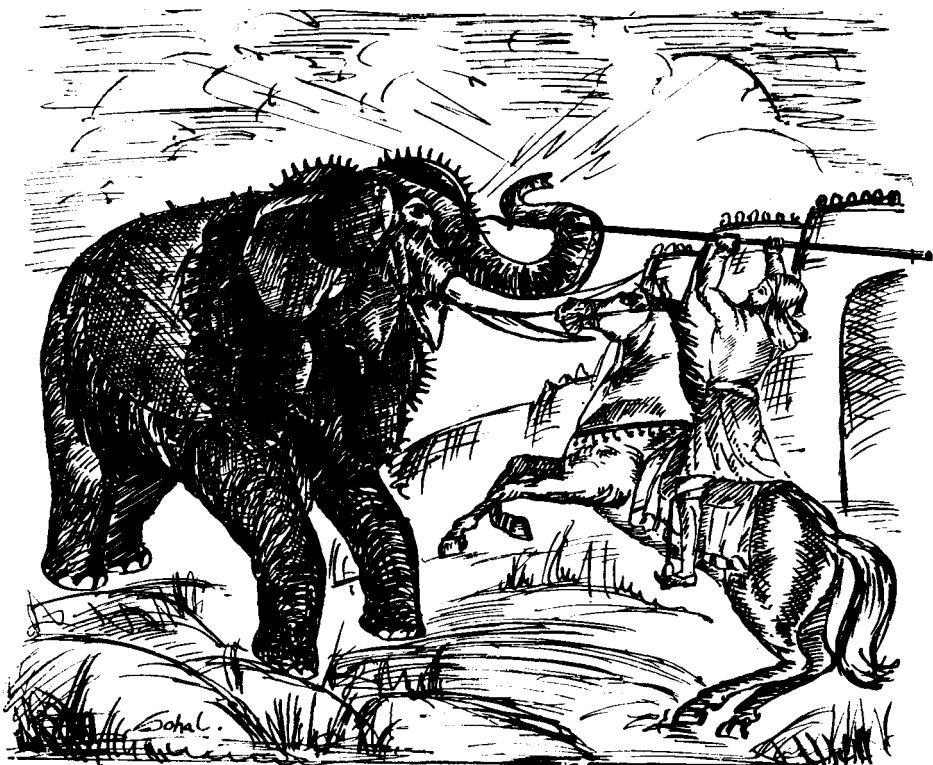
Next day early in the morning, the Sikhs saw Raja Kesari Chand leading his horsemen. He was followed by a drunken elephant with iron plates tied on his forehead. After him followed the large number of soldiers.

The Sikhs gave a good fight to the attackers at their defence post of Agampura; but failed to restrict their advance. The

horsemen of Raja Kesari Chand and the ferocious elephant were advancing menacingly towards the fort. The Sikhs fired their guns from the fort; but it caused little effect to check their advancement. The drunken elephant and soldiers were getting nearer to the fort.

On the order of the garrison commander the gatemen, then opened the gate for a while to let Bhai Bachittar Singh and Bhai Udai Singh come out riding their horses. It was again shut against the attackers.

Bhai Bachittar Singh, riding on his horse, came in front of the elephant. Very smartly, he saved himself against the elephant's attack. Then letting the reins of the horse fall on his forearms, he rose on to his stirrups and holding the spear in both of his hands, gave a forceful stroke of his spear on the elephant's forehead. The blade of the spear got penetrated deep into the elephant's forehead after causing a hole into the iron plate. For



Bhai Bachittar Singh facing the elephant

a moment, Bachittar Singh observed the movements of the elephant's trunk, then he gave a strong push to the already penetrated blade and then after churning the handle with his hands, he drew out the blade. The elephant shrieked in agony and turned away trampling under his feet whosoever came on his way. It caused great confusion among the hill troops. The Sikhs took advantage of the confusion and made repeated charges on them. They had lost their defence post to the attackers, but the confusion caused by the wounded elephant provided them an opportunity to turn the tables on the attackers. They, then, fought with more confidence. Bhai Udai Singh swooped at Raja Kesari Chand and in the duel fight, that ensued, he cut off his head from his body. The Sikhs gave a sound thrashing to the confused hillmen. They left the field in a very disorderly manner. The Sikhs won the battle and undoubtedly the credit of the victory rested with Bhai Bachittar Singh & Bhai Udai Singh. Guru Gobind Singh admired them for their bold feats.

## **20. The Hands that serve deserve the Grace**

“Cursed are the hands and feet which are not used in the service of mankind. Let our feet tread on the truthful path of virtue leading us to the service of mankind,” advises the Gur-bani. Doing honest labour for one’s living, sharing of one’s earning with the needy and meditating on God’s name are the basic principles of the Sikh faith. According to Guru Nanak Dev ji “He, who works hard for his living and out of his honest earning, gives something in the way of charity, infact recognises the real path of righteousness.” The Sikh Gurus brought home to their followers that honest labour has its dignity and the noble work of serving the people deserved their regards.

One day Guru Gobind Singh was sitting in his Darbar. He was conversing with his Sikhs over a certain matter. During the course of conversation he paused a bit and called Zalam Singh. The latter was Guru's water attendant (Garhwaiee). As the Guru was feeling thirsty he wanted him to bring him water.

Finding that Zalam Singh was not nearby to respond to the Guru's call, a Sikh youngman, who was sitting close to the Guru stood up. He folded his hands and humbly asked the Guru, “May I bring water for you, Sir?” The Guru did not speak but hinted him with the movement of his hand to do so. The Sikh youth was wearing a spotless clean dress. His hands were very soft. The fingers of his hands were very tender and slender.

In a moment he came back and presented the cup of water to the Guru. Before taking the cup to his lips, the Guru looked at the soft hands of the young Sikh and said to him, “Your hands look so soft as if they were kept reserved. Why are they so tender and soft? Tell me, what do you do for your living? Does your occupation not require any service from your hands”?

The young Sikh respectfully replied, “True King! My parents are rich. We have our servants to serve us. They do all the work for us. Not once in my life have I been called upon to do any sort of work. The truth is that for the first time in my life, I have

used my hands to fetch water for you. I, always take care not to let my hands get soiled any way. I am very particular to keep myself neat and clean. As I scare myself from all kinds of work, so my hands and fingers are soft and tender."

The Guru did not take the water, instead he spilled it on the ground and said, "As the water was polluted, it was not fit for drinking." The Sikh youth felt ashamed and pleaded the Guru to forgive him, thinking that the Guru had noticed something wrong in the water. Pleading his innocence he said to the Guru, "True king! I had washed my hands, and also the cup before filling it with clean water. I do not know how it has got polluted."

The Guru said, "Your hands are not clean. They are polluted. The cup and also the water in it have got polluted by the touch of your impure hands."

The Sikh youngman became more confused. He was at a loss to know why the Guru thought his hands impure and unworthy to serve him. To remove his confusion the Guru raised his voice and said, "Listen my child, the first lesson of Sikh faith is service to God and His people. Service kills one's ego and purifies one's mind. A Sikh must make use of his physical capabilities in doing useful and honest work not only to support himself but also to serve God's people. God has given us the gift of human body. If we do not use it properly in the service of God's people, then, firstly we become ungrateful to God and secondly we turn it into a dead and untouchable thing incapable of doing any action. You know that a dead body is a worthless thing. When we do not make use of a thing we lose it. Therefore you should not make your handsome body a worthless thing by not getting service from it."

The Sikh youth, then realised that the hands that served others were the clean hands and that which remained idle without doing any service were soiled and impured. The Guru's lesson went so deep into his heart that he dedicated his whole being in the service, doing all kinds of jobs in the Langar ie cooking and distributing food, carrying water, washing utensils and sweeping the floor. The Guru and the Sikhs praised him for his devotional service.



## **21. The Petition of the Rajas And the Charge of General Adina Beg and General Painde Khan.**

In their bid to expel the Guru from Anandpur, the Rajas had attacked the Guru with a strong force comprising the armies of almost all the hill chiefs. They were also supported by the local Rangars and Gujjars who were inimical to the Sikhs. But the Guru was successful in repulsing their combined armies with great slaughter. Their defeat had revealed upon them the fact that the Guru was too powerful for them to humble him. At the same time they viewed the ever increasing power and glory of the Guru and his Sikhs as most distressing and painful thing constantly hurting their pride as the rulers of the region. They had in their mind, the misconceived fear that one day, the Guru would deprive them of their kingdoms. Thinking that they themselves were incapable of checking the rapidly increasing power and influence of the Guru in the region, they decided to seek the help of the Emperor by sending to him a petition against the Guru and his activities. They, thus, prepared a memorial to be presented to the Emperor. In the memorial they stated, "Your Majesty, the Guru defies your authority and openly provoke people to rise against you. He even tried to instigate us against your benevolent rule, but we being the loyal vassals of the Emperor disdain entertaining anything against your Majesty. But the Guru has adopted the royal insignia. He has thousands of fanatical followers and thousand more are daily flocking to his flag, ever ready to lay down their lives on his bidding. He is called the True king by his followers. He has created the Khalsa, a new faith different from the Hindu and the Muslims religions. Large number of low caste people have been attracted to his new creed, which posed a danger to the Hindu as well as the Muslim faith. He is bent upon avenging the death of his father by uprooting the tree of the Mughal rule, which to him is the tree of oppression.

He is encouraging his followers by holding forth to them the hopes that the time is fast approaching when the Mughal power

falls to dust and on its ruins the Khalsa will establish its rule. We did try a number of times to break his power; but have failed. He has even beaten back a number of expeditions sent against him by the Subedars. Elevated with these victories, his Sikhs are becoming more and more dangerous to your rule in this part of the Empire. Any delay or apathy shown in taking action against the Guru will prove ruinous to the dignity of the Mughal authority "

Raja Ajmer Chand was asked to proceed to the Deccan and present the petition to the Emperor. The Emperor was alarmed to read the contents of the petition. He had been receiving the news about the creation of Khalsa and the activities of the Guru for sometime with suspicions. But, the petition's contents confirmed his suspicions that the Guru had really become a power dangerous to the sway of Mughal rule in that region. He, therefore, ordered General Adina Beg and General Painde Khan, each of whom had five thousand troops under his command, to march to Punjab and punish the Guru.

At Ropar, the troops of hill chiefs also joined the imperial forces. Thus the combined armies marched off to attack Anandpur. As the Mughal soldiers appeared in the vicinity of Anandpur, within the range of shots, they were greeted with the shower of arrow shots delivered from the Anandpur fort. The raining of incessant and swift arrow shots from the fort checked the advance of the enemy soldiers and forced them to halt their march.

A contingent of the Sikh soldiers was deployed in the fort to shoot their arrows and fire gun shots on the attackers; but the main body of the Sikh fighting force came out to face the attackers on the battle field.

Mughal General Painde Khan was known as an excellent bowman. Being a good shot he was proud of his marksmanship. He thought, he might bring a quick end to the battle if he could kill the Guru. He was sure that he would kill the Guru if the latter accepted his challenge for a single combat. Though he was told by the hill chiefs that the Gurru was an accomplished warrior and superb marksman, yet he underrated

the worth of the Guru as a fighter. He challenged the Guru for a single combat. The Guru accepted his challenge without any hesitation. He even offered him to attack him first. The proud Khan warned the Guru that he would have to repent over his folly of giving him the chance to attack him first. He added that his arrow never missed the targetted aim and that he would not survive to avail himself of the chance of a return attack. But the Guru smiled and said that he had given him the offer of first attack and there was no question of withdrawing it, or backing out of what had been said.

Both the warriors had their armours protecting their bodies. The Khan keenly observed the armour on the Guru's body to locate some unprotected spot to make it the target of his aim. He noticed a tiny spot on the Guru's fore-head uncovered by the armour. He aimed at it and shot his arrow. The arrow crossed close to the Guru's ear without touching any part of the Guru's body. The Guru had successfully defended himself. The Khan was anguishly surprised at his failure.

The Guru offered him another chance. As the Khan was ashamed of his failure, he was unwilling to avail himself of the second chance. He asked the Guru that justice demanded that he should take his turn. But the Guru said, "I give you another chance to test your marksmanship." The Khan made full use of his skill of archery and delivered his arrow. It touched the border of the Guru's shawl and moved upwards to fall at a short distance. The Guru had defended himself against the two successive attacks of an experienced good shot.

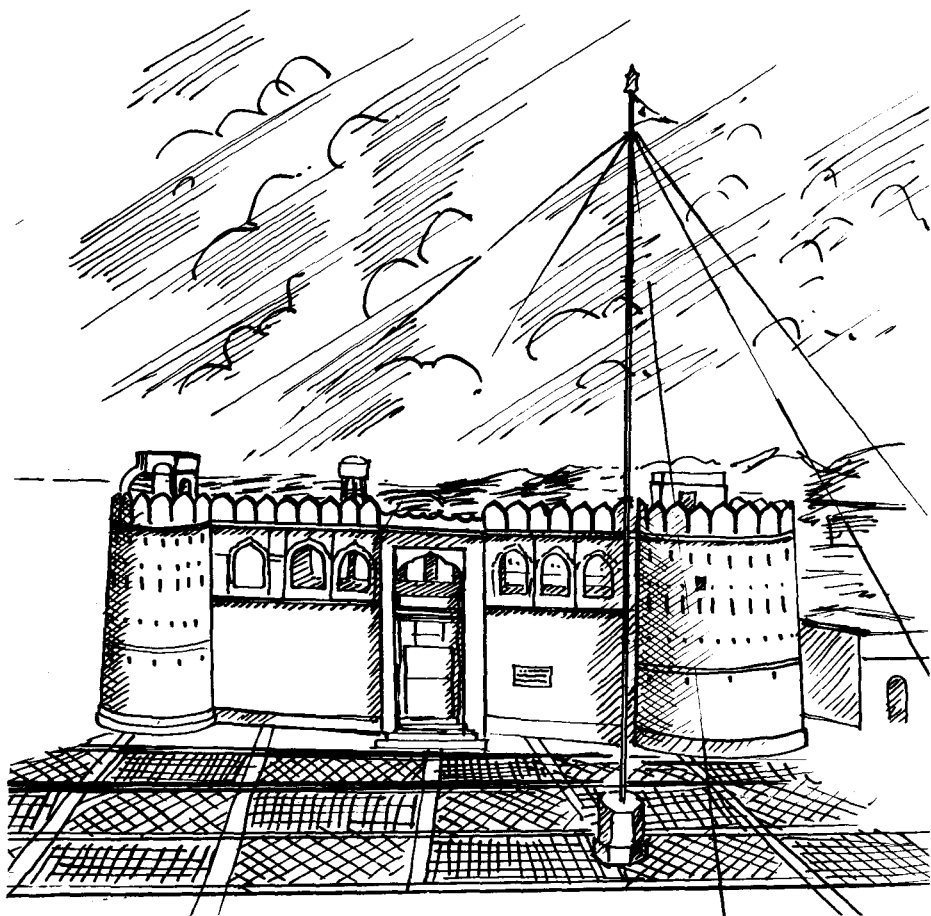
It was, then, his turn to avail. In a thundering voice he said to Painde Khan, "Khan, get ready to defend yourself, I am going to release my arrow." He, then, shot the arrow. The Khan tried his best to thwart the aim by taking his horse this way or that way; but the arrow hit him close to his ear. He fell down from his horse. The Guru then sprang on him with a drawn sword and cut off his head.

The death of Painde Khan disheartened his soldiers. However, they remained in the field and continued their fight. In the meantime the Sikhs had wounded Adina Beg, the other Mughal

General of the invading army. However, he was safely taken out of the field by some soldiers.

Finding that one of their General had lost his life and the other had been wounded seriously, the Mughal soldiers lost all hopes and fled away to save their lives. Thus the Guru and his Sikhs won the battle.

When the news about the fate of General Adina Beg and Painde Khan reached Aurangzeb, he was greatly perturbed. The defeat of the Imperial forces commanded by the experienced generals was a matter of concern for him to react immediately. He perceived that the situation demanded strict measures against the Guru for crushing his power. So he issued orders to the Subedars of Delhi, Sirhind and Lahore, directing them to lead their armies against the Guru and fight against him a decisive battle. Consequently, the Guru was attacked by the Governors with a very large force. The allied armies of the hill chiefs also joined in the attack. After two days of fierce fighting, the Sikhs shut themselves into the four forts each of which had its own garrison commander. Prince Ajit Singh was the garrison commander of Kesgarh. Sher Singh & Nahar



Anandgarh fort

Singh were entrusted with the joint command of Lohgarh fort. Mohkam Singh, one of the five beloved ones was to defend Fatehgarh fort and Guru Gobind Singh himself was leading the Sikhs from Anandgarh fort. But later during the siege all of them shifted to Anandgarh fort.

On May 20, 1704 the Imperial army laid siege to the town and cut off all communication links from without. The siege continued for months together. Soon the provisions within the fort ran short. The besiegers, would not allow anything to reach the town from without. The Sikhs had no other alternative than to fall upon the Mughals provision stores at night and carried away whatever they could. The chain of their night attacks for provision continued for sometime. Many Sikhs lost their lives during those daring night raids. As the flow of regular supply was nowhere in sight, the inmates of the fort felt that they would have to starve themselves to death. They had borne the hardships of the siege with patience and fortitude till then, but tormenting themselves any longer against starvation was beyond their power to endure.

The besiegers heard of the adversity of the Sikh ranks. They decided to take timely advantage of the situation for bringing about the quick end of the battle. They, thus, sent to the Guru, two messengers, one a Brahman as the envoy of the Rajas and the other a Sayyid the envoy of the Mughal viceroys. The two envoys assured the Guru that the Rajas and the viceroys swore by the cow and on the Quran respectively to let him go unmolested if he evacuated the fort and left the town. They explained to the Guru the predicament of the viceroys saying, "They will have to keep the honour of Mughal might intact by showing to the Emperor that they have driven out the Guru from his sanctuary (The town of Anandpur).

Tired of the ordeals of siege the Sikhs implored the Guru to avail of the offer. They argued that the need of the hour was to retire safely to a position of advantage. They maintained that the Guru could then resume his fight with better chances of success after recouping his resources.

The Guru did not have any faith on the oaths of the Rajas or the viceroys. He advised his Sikhs to bear the torments with him for some time more. He was sure that the Sikhs outside would reinforce his forces very soon, and then they could be able to repulse the imperialists from their gates. In order to expose the hollowness of the besieger's promises, the Guru ordered such useless things as rags, old shoes, broken saddles and rubbish of all sorts, to be packed in sacks and carried out of the fort on the backs of bullocks at night to make a show that the Sikhs were removing Guru's property. The Sikhs packed the sacks with rubbish of all sorts and loaded them on the backs of bullocks. They covered the sacks with bright coloured cloth. They also tied burning torches to the bullocks horns to enable the enemy observed their departure easily.

At mid night some Sikhs led out of the fort the bullocks with sacks loaded on their backs. As soon as the besiegers saw the bullocks, they thought that the Sikhs were retiring with Guru's baggage. They threw their promises to the winds, forgot all about their oaths and fell upon the baggage and carried away every sack they could lay their hands upon. To their dismay when they unpacked the sacks, instead of valuables, they found out worthless rubbish in them.

The Sikhs were in great distress. The agonising death by starvation was staring them in the face. The dragon of hunger had terrified them to such an extent that they heeded little to the Guru's advice of maintaining patience for a few more days.

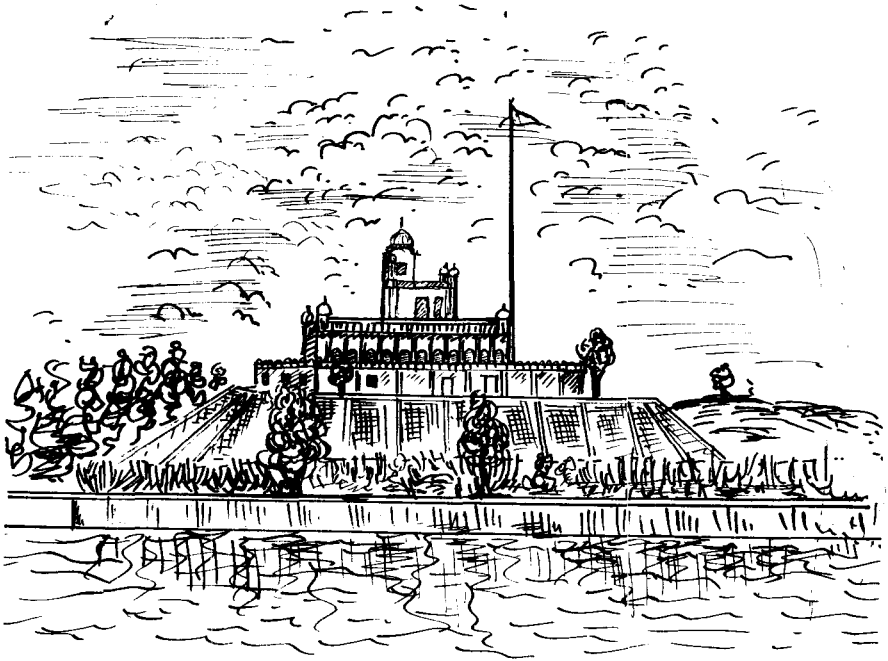
A group of 40 Majha Sikhs under the leadership of Mahan Singh became so much disgusted with the situation that they resorted to desert their Guru. They signed a disclaimer stating that neither he was their Guru, nor were they his Sikhs and deserted the Guru.

The provisions in the fort were totally exhausted. The Sikhs approached Mata Gujri to advise the Guru to evacuate the fort. They feared that they would be starved to death. Mata Gujri too was, in favour of going away from the fort. It was quite agonising for her to see her young grandsons living without

food. At last the Guru yielded to his mother's wishes and agreed to evacuate the fort.

It was the cold dark night of December 1704 A.D. when the Guru, along with his family and few hundred devoted Sikhs left the fort of Anandgarh, never to visit Anandpur again.

The moment the besiegers learnt that the Guru and the Sikhs had left Anandpur, they raised alarm and forgetting all their promises of safe passage, started chasing them hotly. They overtook them on the banks of Sirsa (rivulet). The Sikhs fought against them in the darkness of night and the pouring of rains. The river was in spate. Many Sikhs lost their lives while trying to cross the flooded river. Almost the entire property of the Guru including very rare manuscripts was washed away in



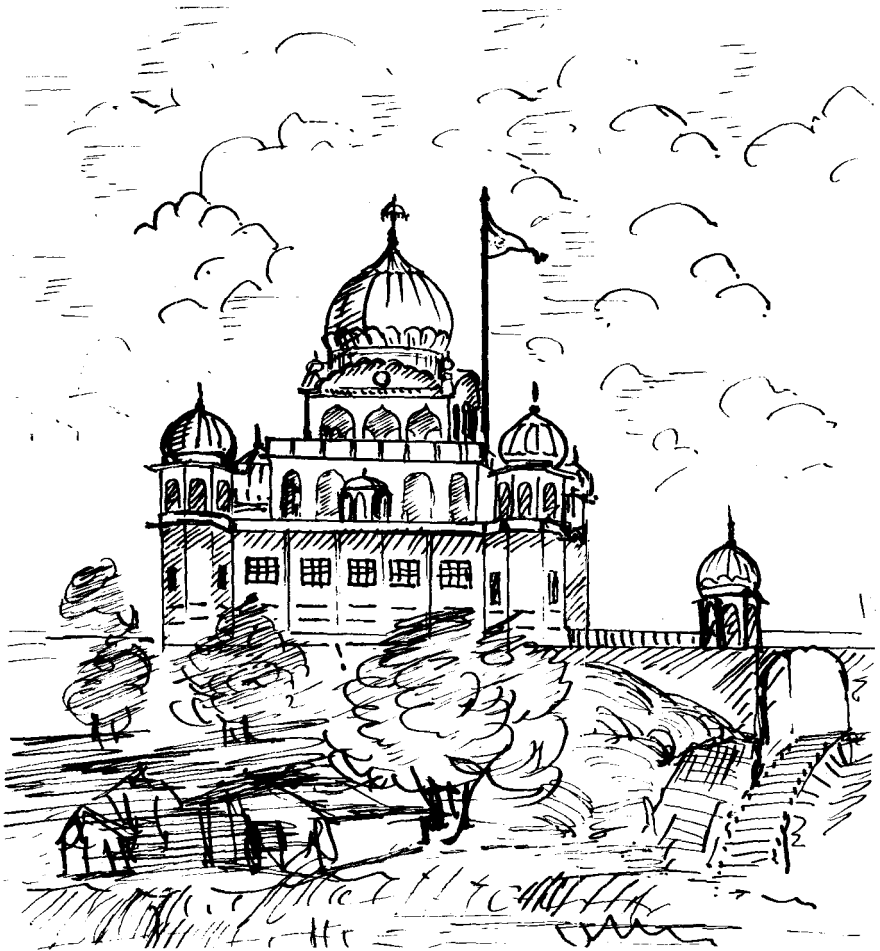
Gurdwara Parwar-Vichhora Ropar



the flooded waters of Sirsa. The rain, the darkness, the flood and the attack by the enemy had combined to cause utter confusion among the Sikhs ranks. In the confusion that ensued the Guru's family got separated. Mata Gujri and her two younger grandsons took different direction and reached "Kheri" in the company of Gangu Brahman, their cook. Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan, the wives of the Guru reached Ropar and then proceeded to Delhi in the company of Bhai Mani Singh a very faithful Sikh. The Guru, the two elder princes ie Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, the five beloved one's and some Sikhs, their total strength not exceeding 45 reached the improvised fortress of Chamkaur after halting for a night at Ropar.

## 23. The Matchless Bravery of the Sikhs At Chamkaur Sahib (Battle December 22, 1704 A.D.)

The fortress at Chamkaur was infact a mud built "haveli" located on a high spot. The Guru had occupied it because there was no other fort available from where he could fight a defensive battle against the formidable armies of the viceroys chasing him hotly. The Guru had with him only 45 Sikhs including the two princes (his elder sons). He had taken refuge in that improvised fortress. He had to devise means for its defence.



Gurdwara Chamkaur Sahib

Thus he deployed some Sikhs soldiers to guard its walls and the gate and himself took his position on the top storey in order to have the full view of the battle and to shoot his arrows on the attackers. Two Sikhs and the two princes were also there with their muskets and arrows to assist the Guru in the defence of the improvised fortress.

In pursuit of the Guru the Mughal armies reached Chamkaur Sahib at night. In their bid to force their entry into the fortress, a contingent of the imperial forces launched a predawn assault, but it was repulsed by the Guru and his vigilant Sikhs. The volleys of musket shots and arrows released by the defenders caused loss of many lives to the attackers. They made repeated charges but each time they had to fall back losing many of their soldiers. The failure of those attacks aroused the anger of the Mughal commander Nahar Khan. He and another army officer in their bid to scale the wall of the fortress, made a violent charge, but both were shot down dead by the Guru.

Their efforts to enter the fortress by scaling its walls having failed, the attackers devised plans to direct their efforts towards forcing open the gate of the fortress.

The numerical strength of the Sikhs was meagre. How could 45 Sikhs withstand against an army of a million soldiers? In order to defend the fortress as long as they could, the Guru decided to send out in succession little bands of five Sikhs each under a captain to fight against the attackers in defence of the gate of the fortress. To face every attack of the enemy, a little band of the Sikhs would come out of the fort and engaged the attackers far superior in number as long as they could fighting valiantly till their end they would kill many soldiers of the enemy before being themselves overpowered and killed.

In this way several batches of the brave Sikhs courted martyrdom in defence of the fortress gate bravely reducing their own number. The minds of the remaining Sikhs were, then, seized with the concern of Guru's safety. They held their council and arrived at the decision of requesting the Guru to make good his escape. Accordingly some Sikhs reached the Guru. There they found the eldest prince Baba Ajit Singh

begging his father to permit him to lead the next band of Sikhs warriors against the attackers. They heard him saying, "Respected father, my name is Ajit (unconquerable) I will not be conquered, however if conquered, I will not come back alive, instead I shall court martyrdom in the battle field like my valiant Sikh brethrens, fighting till the end."

The Guru embraced his son, kissed his forehead, patted his back and bade him go to face the certain death. Baba Ajit Singh was hardly eighteen. Before, he had bade farewell to his father, the Sikhs intervened and with folded hands requested the Guru to save his and his two sons lives. They argued, if alive he could raise thousands of fighters to carry on the fight for the sacred cause. But the Guru scorned the idea of saving his and his sons lives saying that the lives of his Sikhs were as precious to him as those of his sons.

He let Baba Ajit Singh and five Sikhs go and fight the attackers. Baba Ajit Singh and his little band fought vehemently killing a number of enemy's soldiers in a hand to hand fight. His dauntless courage and the fighting skill made the enemy wonder struck. The Guru, who had been watching the performance of his son from the top storey, showered, in his mind, praises on him for his admirable feats. He saw him fall like the bravest soldier. He thanked God that his son had proved worthy of His cause.

Baba Jujhar Singh was a lad of fourteen. He had seen his brother bodily fighting against the experienced imperial troops and finally fallen like a warrior. He, likewise, got the permission of his father to lead the next band of five Sikh warriors. The Guru armed him with his own hands, gave him a sword and a shield, patted his back, kissed him and let him go saying, "Go my child and join your elder brother treading the path shown by him." He fought as daringly as his brother had fought. The child warrior proved his worth by cutting down a large number of experienced soldiers of the enemy and kept fighting valiantly till his end. At his fall, the Guru again thanked the Lord, that he, too, had courted martyrdom for His cause.



Baba Ajit Singh in the battle field



Baba Jujhar Singh boldly facing the enemy's soldiers

Throughout the day long fighting, the small batches of Sikh warriors, had successfully defended the fortress gate. By that time Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh (Three out of the five beloved ones) Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh (the two princes) and 35 Sikhs had courted martyrdom in the holy presence of the Guru. As the night had fallen by then, the Mughal army lay down to take rest. The five surviving Sikhs took counsel and said to the Guru, "We pray you to make good your escape. If alive you will raise thou -

sand: of Khalsa warriors to wage their relentless war against the tyrants. Your Khalsa will, then destroy all these cruel and faithless oppressors."

When the Guru declined their suggestion the Sikhs then said to him, "O, true king, now we, the five Sikhs are speaking to you not as your disciples but as a Khalsa body, which according to your own edict is 'Guru Khalsa', equal in status to the Guru himself. We as Guru Khalsa order you to make good your escape. As we are acting according to your own preachings, we hope you will excuse us for assuming this role."

As the Guru could not go against the dictates of the Guru Khalsa, he had to yield. He then declared, "After me the Panth Khalsa shall be the Guru, taking guidance from the holy scripture "Guru Granth Sahib." Wherever five Sikhs assemble and remember me I will be with them helping their good cause. The assembly of five Gur Sikhs will have the authority to grant pardon and readmit into Khala fold a Sikh who has broken any rule of the Khalsa conduct by again administering baptism to him and imposing a suitable punishment (Tankhah) on him for his misconduct."

He, then, thrice went round the Sikhs who were sitting in a circle, placed his plume and crest in front of them, offered them his arms, bowed before them and cried out, "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Sri Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh." Thus he entrusted the Guruship to the Khalsa. The five Sikhs comprising Guru Khalsa were Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Man Singh, Bhai Sant Singh and Bhai Sangat Singh. The Guru Khalsa, then ordered the above mentioned first three Sikhs to accompany the Guru and the last two ie Bhai Sant Singh and Bhai Sangat Singh to remain in the fortress to hold it against a million of imperial soldiers as long as they had life in their bodies.

The sky was covered with thick clouds and the darkness of night was all prevailing. In such an atmosphere at the dead of night, the Guru and his three companions left the fortress and proceeded onwards on their dangerous course each following his own path but guided by the direction of a certain star, which emerged occasionally because of the clouds, with the hope that after covering some distance they would join one another at some junction.

## 24. In the Guise of Uchch Ka Pir

The Guru, after leaving the fortress of Chamkaur, moved to the neighbouring forest area making it his escape route. Besides trees that forest land was covered with the dense growth of wild thorny bushes and shrubs. The Guru had to make his way through those wild vegetations and that too in the darkness of night. As he had been travelling bare foot, many thorns ran into his feet. His dress became thread bare. The skin got bruised. His feet got swollen and blisters appeared on them. Despite night long journey, he had not made much progress.

Before dawn he had reached a village named Kheri. There two Gujjars recognised him. They raised an alarm. To silence them the Guru had to kill them. The constant vigil by the patrolling parties of the Nwab of Sirhind had constrained the Guru to travel only by night to avoid being spotted and arrested. During the day he would rest among clusters of shrubs. In this way, the Guru kept going on his weary wanderings through the Machhiwara forest for some days. Fatigued and hungry he lay on straw bedding with poisonous snakes roaming about. He had to face the severe cold of those wintery nights of December without any cover what to speak of the cosy warmth of quilts. For pillow he had nothing but a clod of earth to rest his head on. To satisfy his hunger he had to eat the leaves of trees or wild fruit. He bore all those ordeals with great fortitude. He did not complain against the misfortunes. His faith in God remained unshaken. Forsaking love for all wordly comforts, he cherished in his mind the love of his dear friend (God). The life without his dear friend (God) was to him as pain inflicting as the butcher's knife did. Treating all those distresses as his friend's (God's) good gifts to him, he bore them without showing any grievance. Pleasures or pains, victories or defeats, weals or woes had not affected his faith in God. He treated all those situations alike.

Fatigued and with blistered feet as the Guru was, he could not walk. He lay down to rest. Soon he fell asleep. Following the direction of the star indicated by the Guru, his three



companions reached the spot where he was sleeping. They awakened him. They told him that they were being hotly pursued by the imperial army. The Guru suggested to them to take shelter in a neighbouring garden. As the Guru could not walk, Bhai Man Singh carried him on his back to the garden. The Guru drank water from the garden well. He also took his bath for the first time in many days. After the bath he felt refreshed.

The garden was the property of Gulaba Masand. Hearing that the Guru had taken shelter in his garden, he went there and requested the Guru and the Sikhs to accompany him to his house. They came to his house. They stayed at his house for a few days. Gulaba served them with all sincerity. But as he began to sustain fear of the imperial army in his mind, the Guru felt it advisable to move on to some other place.

In the village of Machhiwara, there lived two Rohilla Pathan brothers named Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan. They were the great admirers of the Guru. Several times they had sold horses to the Guru. The latter had ~~always~~ treated them with great kindness. They had been greatly impressed by the piety of the Guru. They looked upon him as a true saint, the God's light. When they heard that the Guru was placed in a precarious situation and that his life was in danger, they resolved to provide him protection even though it might cost them their lives.

At Machhiwara an old Sikh lady Mai Gurdevi offered to the Guru some coarse cotton cloth which she had woven for the Guru. It was got dyed blue and a blue dress similar to the one worn by the Muslim saints of Uchch was got prepared for the Guru. He put on the blue dress and assumed the disguise of a Muslim saint of Uchch. He was seated in a palanquin like the Pir of Uchch. Four persons lifted the palanquin on their shoulders. The Pathan brothers lifted it in front while Bhai Man Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh did so in rear. Bhai Daya Singh waved a Chaur.



Guru Gobind Singh ji in the guise of  
Uchchka Pir

Thus carrying the palanquin with the Guru seated in it on their shoulders, they set out to move on towards Malwa. On their way wherever they were stopped and questioned about their identity, the Pathan brothers would coolly answer "Our Pir is on a visit to his followers from the sacred village of Uchch near Multan. We are carrying him in the Palki. As the Pirs of Uchch were held in great reverence and awe, the Guru's party went on travelling this way without facing any untoward happening. However, one day, the party was made to stop for identification by a commander of the Imperial army. As the rumour that the Guru in the guise of Muslim Pir had been moving about, was floating, the statement of the Pathan brothers that they had been carrying their Pir appeared to him unconvincing. He got suspicious. In order to ascertain as to who the occupant of the palanquin was, he sent for Qazi Pir Muhammed of Solah. That Qazi had once been the Guru's Persian, tutor.

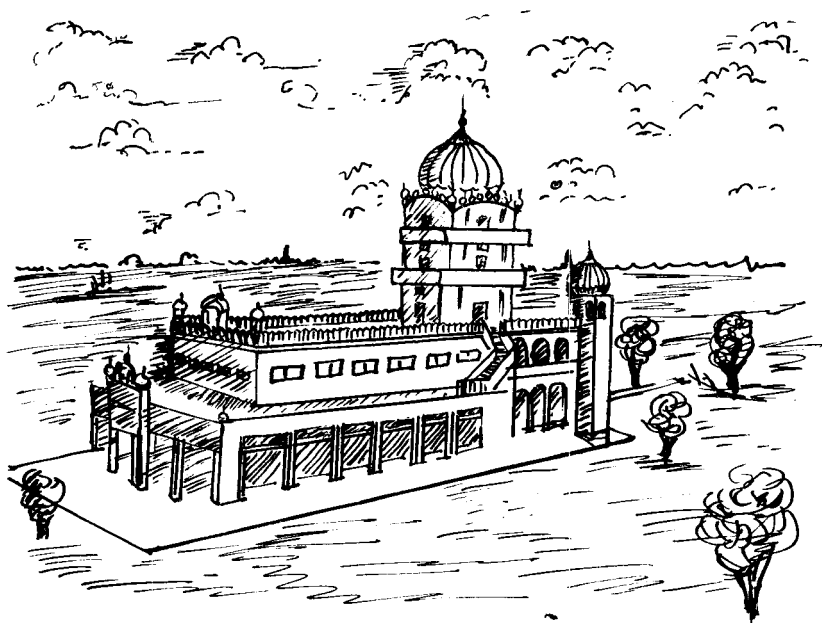
The Qazi arrived and he at once recognised the Guru occupying the seat in the palanquin. He said to the Commander, "I know the occupant of the Palki. Really he is the holiest Pir in unison with Allah. He is the greatest of all Pirs. Do not put such a holy person to any inconvenience by stopping and questioning him. Let him proceed on unmolested."

The praising comments of the Qazi for the Guru removed the suspicion of the Commander. He was ashamed of his conduct of having put the holyman to inconvenience. He begged his pardon and allowed him to proceed wherever he pleased.

After walking for few more miles the Guru's party reached a village named, Hehar in Ludhiana district. Mahant Kirpal of Bhangani fame lived there. He welcomed the Guru to his house and served him most cordially. At the village Hehar, the Guru rewarded, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan for their loyalty and service by giving to them a pair of gold bracelets and a hukmnama. They were allowed to go back to their home.

Despite Imperial orders against providing shelter or extending any kind of help to the Guru, here and there both Hindus and Muslims came forward and offered shelter to the Guru. Mahant Kirpal was very much eager to serve the Guru as long as he could; but at the same time he began to feel that the Guru should shift to a place promising better means of protection to him. The Guru read his mind and decided to move on. From Hehar, the Guru, after covering some distance reached Alamgir (Ludhiana)

Here Nagahia Singh (the eldest son of Bhai Mani Singh Longowal Sangur) met him. He offered a horse to the Guru for his riding. From Alamgir the Guru moved on to Raikot. Rai Kalha was the Chaudhary of Jagroan and Rai Kot. He was one of the numerous Muslim admirers of the Guru. Caring little for imperial order, he warmly welcomed the Guru to his house. He served him with most loving hospitality. He sent one of his men to Sirhind to bring detailed information regarding Guru's mother and his younger sons, Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh.



Gurdwara Alamgir Ludhiana.

The man came back from Sirhind. Bitterly crying and sending curses to the tyrannical rulers, he narrated to the Guru the pathetic tale of the martyrdom of his young sons and his aged mother. He narrated how heroically did the little princes face the ugliest cruelties of the rulers remaining firm and steadfast in their faith till their ends and were bricked alive in the wall. The Guru patiently heard the painful narrative and remarked. "No, my sons have not died, they have become immortal. They have upheld their faith and scorned the worldly temptations. They are alive. It is the city of Sirhind that has become cursed." He, then, shot an arrow which uprooted a bush. Pointing towards it the Guru remarked that the roots of the atrocious Mughal rule would be destroyed in the similar way and that the process had been commenced in that direction with the martyrdom of the innocent young princes

## **25. Tiny Lives And the Heroic Feats.**

On that fateful stormy night of December 1704, the Imperial army attacked the Guru and his Sikhs on the banks of river Sirsa, when after evacuating Anandpur, they were proceeding towards the plains. In the confusion, that ensued because of the attack coupled with the hardships of crossing the swollen river, the members of Guru's family got separated. Mata Gujri ji and her two younger grand sons found themselves delinked from the main body. For a night they took shelter in the hut of a boatman named 'Kum'. Gangu Brahman was also taking shelter along with them. He was an old cook of the Guru's family. He suggested to Mata ji to accompany him to his village, Kheri. She readily accepted the suggestion thinking that he was anxious for the safety of the young princes. Gangu took them to his village and made them stay at his house.

Gangu was a greedy man. His ill-intention was to rob Mata ji of her gold. As his mind was seized with the avaricious feelings of getting gold, Gangu, the Brahman, forgot all about his old relations with the Guru's family. He turned traitor to his benefactor and reported to the Faujdar of Morinda about the presence of Guru's mother and her two grandsons at his house. The Faujdar sent soldiers and they arrested Mata Gujri ji and the young princes. Gangu, the traitor was rewarded for helping the Government. Mata ji and the princes were first taken to the kotwali of Bassi Pathana and thereafter shifted to Sirhind. At Sirhind they were shut in the jail named Thanda Burj as captives.

The Thanda Burj, itself, was a very cold place. In addition to it, the cold wintery nights of December intensified the severity of the cold for the captives i.e. (Aged Mata Gujri ji, young princes Baba Zorawar Singh aged 8, and Baba Fatech Singh aged 5). They were not provided with any woollen cover to protect themselves against the intense cold. Moreover they were not supplied even those necessities which were prescribed for ordinary prisoners.

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On December 25, 1704 AD Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh were made to part from their grandmother and told that they would be taken to the court of the Subedar for their trial.



Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh taking leave of their grandmother for Suba's court

Before their departure Mata ji embraced them. She pressed them close to her bosom, and kissed their fore heads. Reminding to them the great sacrifice of their grand father, Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib for his faith, she advised the young princes to uphold the glorious tradition of the family. She wanted them to exhibit their unyielding courage and steadfastness of conduct against the threats and the temptations of the authorities. The young princes assured their grand mother that they would prove worthy grand sons of Guru Teg Bahadur and the sons of the great saint soldier Guru Gobind Singh.

Nwab Wazir Khan and his noble had assessed that the little children would get nervous and overawed at his court, when they found themselves surrounded by aliens alround and that they would then beg for mercy and forgiveness. But to their surprise, contrary to their expectations, the behaviour of the young princes did not reflect any sign of nervousness on their part Entering into the court-room the young princess instead of

bowing their heads to the Nawab and the nobles, loudly greeted them with the Sikh salutation "Waheguru ji Ka Khalsa Sri WaheGuru Ji Ki Fateh."

During the trial the Nawab asked the princes, "What will you do if you are set free? Prompt came the reply from the young princes, we shall gather together our Sikh warriors and fight against the atrocious Mughal rule." "How long will you fight against the mighty Mughal rule with your small number of Sikhs? asked the Qazi "We shall continue waging our war against this rule till it is finished root and branch," replied the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Nawab and the nobles got offended to hear such answers from the princes. The Nawab, then, tried to win over the princes by promising them many comforts of life if they accepted his proposal. He said to the young princes, "You are young children, still at a very tender age. If you embrace the Muslim faith, we shall provide you with all the amenities to grow up into handsome young men. You will, then, lead comfortable lives like those of Mughal princes. I advise you to shun entertaining the path of confrontation, come to our fold and grow up to lead a whole life, otherwise you will be butchered."

Remaining unswayed the princes replied, "You know, we are the grand sons of Guru Teg Bahadur who sacrificed his life for his faith. How do you expect us to go against the traditions of our family laid by our grand father? We shall prefer death to losing our faith."

After hearing the young princes the Subedar asked the Qazi to read the Fatwa (decree); but the Qazi refused to do so. saying that giving of Fatwa against the little children of eight and five was unislamic.

At the Sirhind court certain nobles were against punishing the innocent children for the crimes they had not committed. Pleading for the princes Nawab Sher Mohammed khan of Maler-Kotla said, "Our fight is against the Guru and to' punish these innocent children for the offences of their father was against the doctrines of Islam. I could not become a party to the heinous



crime of punishing the innocents. I do not like to be considered an unworthy and cruel person before God with the stigma of sins stamped on my soul. I would like to present myself in the Court of Allah with my unpolluted soul after my death. I do not like my soul to carry the burden of sinful acts committed against the innocent little souls."

Dewan Todar Mal, a rich noble offered any price, the Nwab would demand for sparing the innocent lives of the princes. The Nwab too, appeared to be in a wavering mind as to take or spare the lives of the young princes. However, Sucha Nand, the dewan, was against the idea of showing any clemency to the children. Stressing his point he argued, "How is it advisable killing the snake and sparing its young ones."?

At the end of the trial the views of those who were in favour of punishment prevailed. They opined that the punishment would serve as a warning and desist people from waging rebellious war against the government.

The Qazi, then, pronounced his Fatwa sentencing the innocent children to be bricked alive in the wall. Thus on December 27, 1704 AD, the innocent young sons of the tenth lord ie



Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh  
being bricked alive in the wall

Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh were bricked alive. When the height of the wall reached their breasts, they were beheaded by the executioner.

Nowhere in the history of the whole world do we find an instance when the tiny tots like the sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been tried for the offences they never committed and brutally butchered by the cruel rulers.

When the tragic news about the killing of the young princes reached their grand mother, Mata Gujri ji, she was so much over stricken with grief that she went into trance and breathed her last.

Dewan Todar Mal secured site for the cremation, where the princes bodies were cremated. To commemorate the herioc feats of the two tiny lives, a historic Gurdwara was built there. It is known as Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sajhib. Another Gurdwara known as Gurdwara Jyoti Sarup stands as memorial to the martyrdom of the two princes and their grand mother, Mata Gujri.

In order to avenge the killings of the innocent princes, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur attacked Wazir Khan in 1710. Under his command the Sikh warriors killed Wazir Khan in the battle field. They caught Dewan Sucha Nand and punished him for his odious role. In their anger the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur ransacked and destroyed the whole city of Sirhind.

## **26. Wanderings in the Malwa Region**

Rai Kalha, the Muslim Chaudhary of Rai Kot served the Guru with loving care for a number of days. Daringly he defied the official order of providing no shelter to the Guru. In his calculations the Guru's blessings were sacred and weighed heavier than the fear of sufferings, he might bear by incurring upon himself the wrath of the Nwab. After sharing his hospitality for a few days, the Guru took leave of the noble Chaudhary Rai Kalha and set out on his journey further towards Malwa and reached a village named Dina (Faridkot)

In Dina, there lived three brothers Shamira, Lakhmira and Takhat Mal. They were the grand sons of Bhai Jodha, a devout Sikh of Guru Hargobind. The brothers accorded the Guru a grand welcome. The Guru told them that they could invite trouble for themselves by extending such an open support to him. But the brothers said that they were ready to give any kind of sacrifice for the Guru.

When the people of the area came to know that their Guru had been camping at Dina, they started visiting him in hundreds. The news of this development soon reached the Nwab of Sirhind. He lost no time in sending a stern order to the brothers to desist from giving shelter to the Guru. He ordered them to hand over the Guru to him and that in case of non-compliance of his order, the brothers would be attacked and taught a severe lesson.

Shamira was a very bold man. He wrote back to the Nwab that the Guru was staying with him, leading the life of a pious saint and that harassing such a holy man was improper on his part.

Before his departure from Anandpur, the Guru had received a letter from Aurangzeb requiring his presence at Delhi. The Emperor had stated in the letter that he swore by Quran to treat him honourably. Now finding time at Dina the Guru, in reply wrote a long letter to the Emperor titling it. Zafarnama (letter of victory) It contained 111 (one hundred and eleven) verses couched in spirited Persian stating all the wrongs done to him

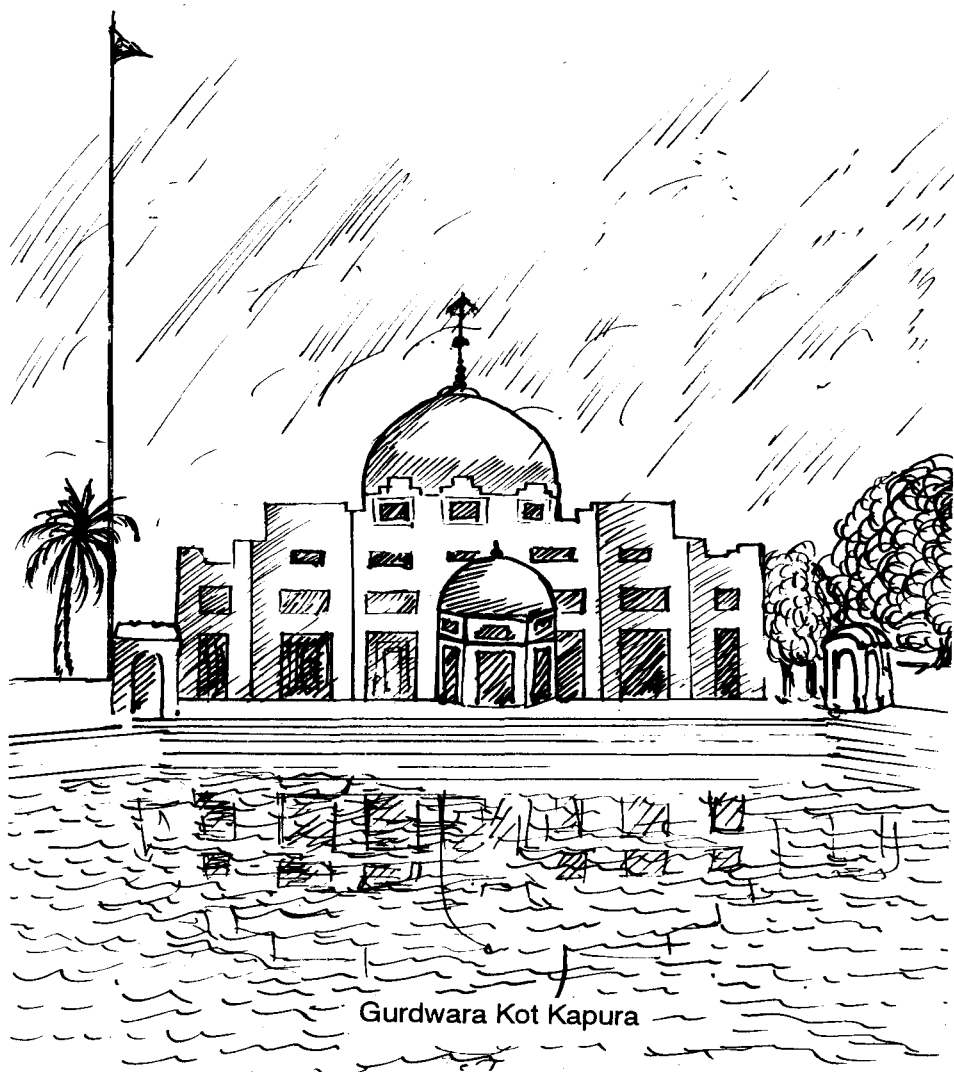
by his viceroys i.e. how they broke the oaths, how his four sons and hundreds of the Sikhs were treacherously killed and how boldly the little band of 40 Sikhs warriors fought against the army of thousands of his soldiers. He rebuked the Emperor for his bigotry and oppression and asserted that the Khalsa would one day avenge all his atrocities committed to them. He also justified his role of wielding sword against him stating "when all other means for the redress of injustices fail, it is righteous to resort to sword." Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharm Singh were sent to deliver the letter to the Emperor at Ahmadnagar. They were successful in delivering the letter to the Emperor. The reading of the letter awakened the Emperor as if from his slumber. He felt himself guilty. His inner conscience tormented him for his sins. He was filled with repentance and remorse for his sinful deeds. The letter had deeply affected his mind and brought about a marked change in his attitude towards life. He, now, earnestly desired to meet the Guru. Thus he summoned the Guru once more to come and meet him.

News were daily pouring in that the Nwab would attack the Guru at Dina. Feeling that the hospitable people of Dina would experience hardship if the battle were to be fought there, the Guru decided to leave Dina for some other station.

He, thus, moved to a village named Bhagta. The offspring of Bhai Behlo a Gursikh and contemporary of Guru Arjan Dev ji lived in the village. They received the Guru. The Guru stayed with them for three days. During those three days he baptised a number of Sikhs and enlisted them as the members of the Khalsa army. His hosts presented to the Guru a very fine horse, when he took leave of them.

From Bhagta the Guru moved on to Kot-Kapura. By that time the Guru had again raised a small army of the Khalsa soldiers. At KotKapura, the Guru fixed up his camp outside the town. There was a fortress in the town. The Guru thought it could serve suitably for the defence against the attack of the Nwab's soldiers. Kapura was the lord of the fortress. He came to meet the Guru and presented to him many a presents including some horses as his offering. The Guru proposed to him that they

should resist the attackers from the fortress. Kapura was alarmed at the suggestion. He tried to put off the Guru on the pretext that he had insufficient number of men to encounter the imperial army. As he was unwilling to place the fortress at the disposal of the Guru, the latter rebuked him for his cowardice and remarked that he would soon face destruction. Kapura felt annoyed and came out of the camp.



As Kapura had shut the doors of the fortress for the Guru, the latter had to leave Kot Kapura. He, then, moved to Dhilwan, a village only at a short distance from Kot Kapura. There the Guru discarded his blue dress and put on white dress instead. The Guru burnt the pieces of blue cloth by throwing them one by one into the burning fire signifying that the cruel Mughal rule was being burnt into the fire. A piece of blue cloth fell outside the burning fire. Bhai Man Singh took it up and tied it over his head. It is believed that the sect of blue dressed Nehang Singhs found its origin from that incident.

From Dhilwan, the Guru moved onwards and reached Jaito. Chaudhary Kapura came there to meet the Guru. He fell on the Guru's feet and asked for his forgiveness. He told the Guru that he had lost his peace of mind, since the day he refused the Guru's stay in his fortress.

Nwab Wazir Khan of Sirhind was informed by his men at the royal court that Aurangzeb had invited the Guru to meet him and that the probable meeting could prove ruinous for him. He, therefore, decided to kill the Guru as soon as he could. To materialise it, he ordered the marching of a strong force of five thousand troops against the Guru.

The Nwab's army on the march in pursuit of the Guru was expected to reach the region in three or four days. As the battle against the enemy was certain, the Guru was on the look out of a strategically advantageous spot from where he could bear the assault in a better way with the small army at his command. Consequently he moved on to Khidrana and decided to give the Turks a battle near a dry lake called the Dhab of Khidrana.

## **27. The Battle of Khidrana (Muktsar)**

### **May 1705 AD. And the forty Emancipated ones (Muktas)**

During the siege of Anandpur many a Sikhs, tired of the pangs of starvation, had deserted the Guru. Among them were the forty Sikhs from the Majha tract of the Punjab. They had signed a disclaimer stating neither Guru Gobind Singh was their Guru nor were they his Sikhs. They somehow, escaped being captured by the besiegers and safely reached their villages. But the news, that they had parted company with the Guru when the latter was in straits, had travelled faster and reached the region before their appearance there. They found that the people treated their desertion to the Guru as an act of disgrace for the whole tract of Majha. Every where in the region they were shamed for their act of cowardice quite alien for the followers of the Gurus. Their own wives and parents shut their doors against them and did not let them enter their homes. People vexed them by calling them cowards. Their wives jeered at them saying that it was proper for them to dress up like woman, wear bangles and stay at home. They said they would go to the Guru and fight for him.

Mai Bhago of Jhabal dressed herself as a Singh. She formed a small band of her own volunteers (all males) ready to go to the Guru and fight for him. She went round the villages telling people to give no quarter to those who had turned their back on the Guru. She suggested to the deserters to go back to the Guru and make amend their cowardly conduct. She said she would accompany them with her small band of Singhs. The deserters responded to her suggestion.

Bhai Mahan Singh of Sur Singhwala became the Jathedar as before and the deserters resolved to absolve themselves of the impiety they had committed by deserting their saviour. Thus they commenced their march to the Guru under the commands of Bhai Mahan Singh and Mai Bhago.

To avoid being captured, they had to travel by nights through the unfrequented routes in small batches. Their number swelled as many more Sikhs joined them along the way. Travelling this way for some days they reached Khidrana.

At Khidrana they met a contingent of Sikh soldiers, who had rallied to fight for the Guru. They told Mahan Singh and Mai Bhago that the Guru had gone over to the other side of the lake. Bhai Mahan Singh and his Sikhs companions learnt from them that the army of the Nwab of Sirhind would be reaching there very soon in pursuit of the Guru. Sensing the impending danger so close, Bhai Mahan Singh proposed that they should engage the Mughal army near the dry lake. He said it would provide the Guru time to move to some safer place. His proposal was accepted.

In order to give the enemy an impression of the presence of a large Sikh force stationed there, the Sikhs spreaded white Khaddar sheets on the shrubs.

Soon the enemy's force appeared. The soldiers saw the white sheets and believing those as the tents of the Sikh army, halted their march to fight the battle against the Sikhs there.

They made a charge and the bloody battle ensued. The Sikhs put up a strong resistance. They fought with their usual courage and vehemence. The excessive delivery of arrows and gun shots from their side was causing panic among the enemy's soldiers. Mai Bhago was fighting fearlessly in the foremost rank. The Guru had taken his position on a hillock (Present Tibbi Sahib Muktsar). From there he would select his target and shot his arrow. His arrows sent many an officers and distinguished soldiers to death sleep.

Unlike the mercenary soldiers of the Mughal armies, the Sikhs were fighting for the dear cause of saving the life of their Guru, unmindful of victory or defeat as the consequence of the fighting might be. So long as they had the stock of arrows and ammunition for their guns, they continued fighting with those weapons, when that stock exhausted, they resorted to fight with swords, and spears. In their hand to hand fight, they killed



far greater number of their combatants and went on fighting valorously till over powered and cut down.

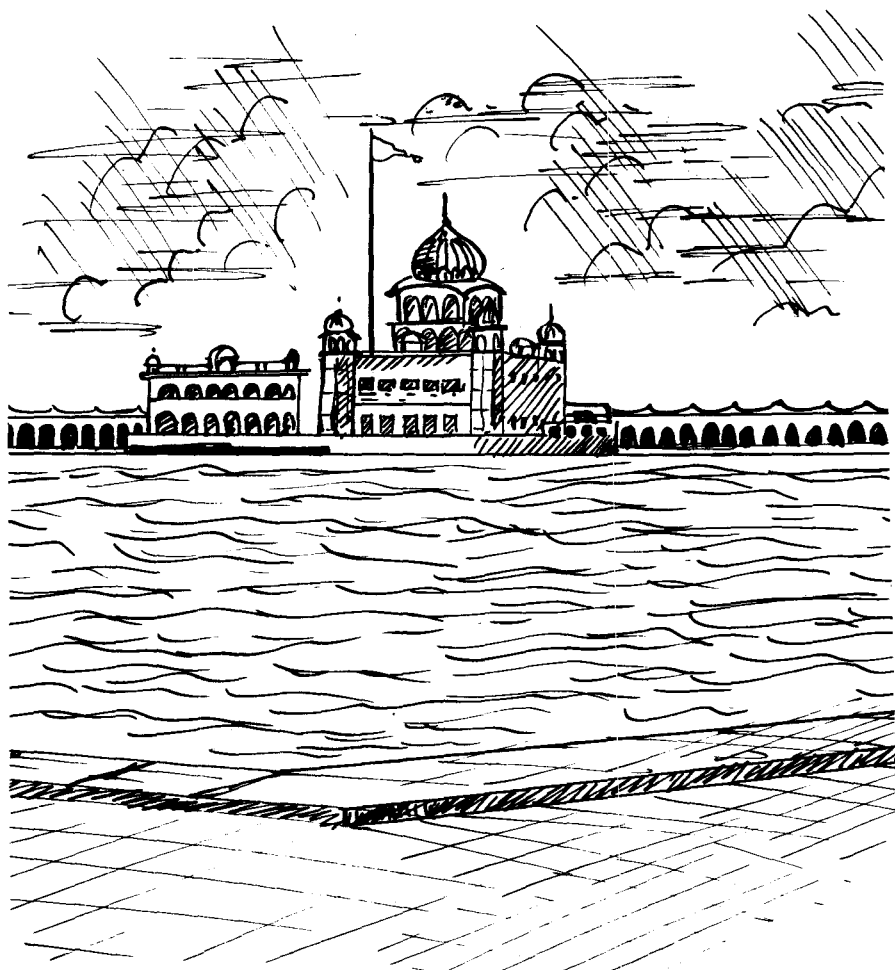
The Muslim army had lost more than three hundred soldiers and officers. Their soldiers were feeling the heat of the desert land unbearable. They were also dying of thirst. Kapura told the commander of the Muslim army that there was the acute scarcity of water and that it was not available in the radius of thirty kilometres. The Muslim soldiers lost their heart to fight and retired leaving even their dead soldiers in the battle field. This way the forty deserters and their Sikh companions laid down their lives for their Guru's safety.

The Muslim army having retreated, the Guru came to the battle field to take care of the wounded and to bless those who had courted martyrdom. He was moving about in the field looking for the wounded and the killed.

One by one he would lift the heads of the fallen Sikhs, put them into his lap, wiped their faces with a piece of cloth and with fatherly affection caressed and blessed each Sikh martyr. It was a heart rending sight. In the same way, when he placed the head of Bhai Mahan Singh in his lap, he found that he had still life in him.

It was as the Guru was rapt in tenderly wiping his face and caressing him with fatherly love, that Mahan Singh opened his eyes. He was immensely pleased to find himself in the Guru's lap. A faint smile appeared on his face. The Guru asked him if he had any wish to be fulfilled. Tears of joy appeared in his eyes and he said to the Guru 'Father! How fortunate am I? I am going to breathe my last in your lap and the wealth of your love and blessings are going with me. What is more precious to aspire for than your blessings? However if you have taken compassion on us, do tear up the disclaimer, the document which is an evidence of broken ties between you as Guru as we, as your Sikhs. Tear it up and reunite the broken ties.'

The Guru had lost all his precious possessions in the course of his struggle against the unjust rulers and his thorny and painful wanderings, but he had preserved the disclaimer intact.



Gurdwara Muktsar Sahib

He was pleased to hear the last wish of Bhai Mahan Singh. He again blessed him and said, "Mahan Singh, you and your companions have fully washed clean the stigma of desertion through your service. All the forty of you have earned for themselves emancipation from the cycle of birth and death. You have become Muktas (Emancipated souls) Khalsa Panth will ever remember the martyrdom of you (the forty Muktas) as prize contribution towards the Guru's cause."

Then taking out the disclaimer from under his belt, he tore it into pieces. Mahan Singh felt immensely relieved and closed his eyes for ever with a smile of satisfaction reigning on his face.

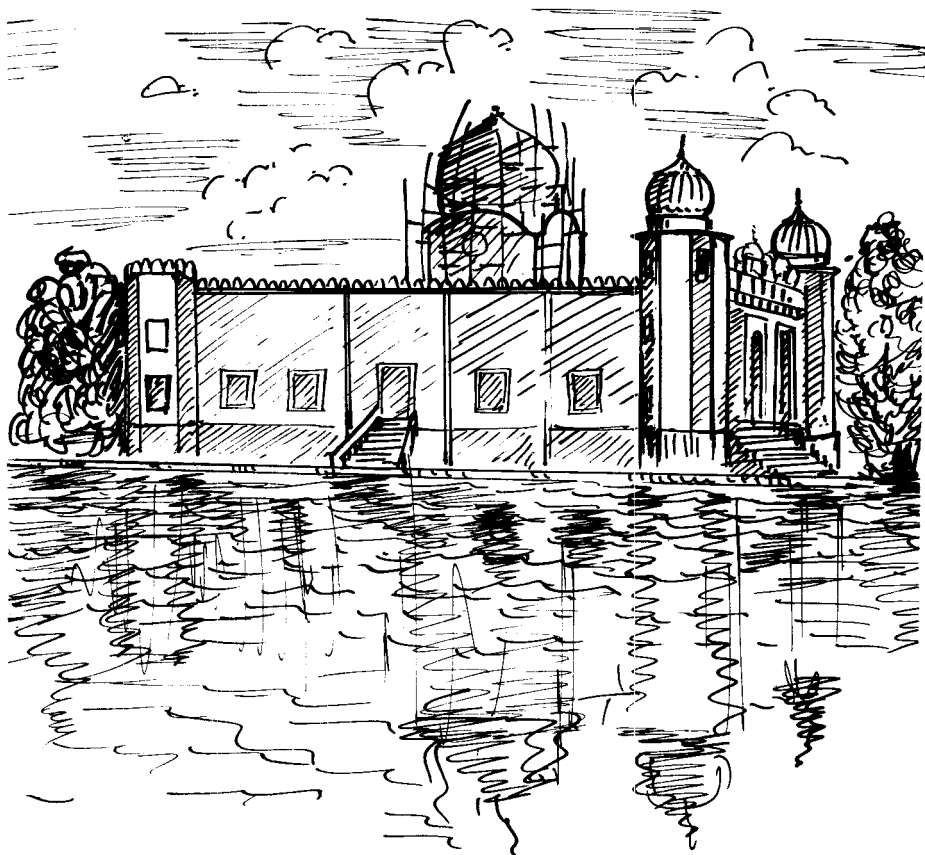
The Guru then found Mai Bhago lying senseless. She was wounded but not severely. The Guru had her carried out of the battle field. Her wounds were dressed. Soon she came to her senses. She was much pleased to see the Guru beside her.

The Guru then got the bodies of the martyrs cremated. In commemoration of the forty Muktas the Guru built a tank at the site of the dry lake and named it Muktsar or the tank of salvation. The present town of Muktsar derives its name from the Muktsar tank.

After few days Mai Bhago's wounds healed up and she was all right to do active service. The Guru baptised her and she was given the name of Bhag Kaur. She put on the male dress. She accompanied the Guru to Talwandi Sabo (Damdamma Sahib) and remained in his service. When the Guru proceeded to the Deccan she went along. She performed active duty and was one of the ten Sikhs who guarded the Guru's bed when he slept. After the Guru's demise she went to Bidar and lived there till the end of her life.

## 28. A Brief Respite at Talwandi Sabo (Damdamma Sahib)

After the battle of Muktsar the Guru resumed his onwards journey and after passing through many a villages on the way reached the Lakhi Jungle. There he made quite a long halt. He revived there almost all those religious activities which were practised at Anandpur Sahib. He started holding prayers sessions both morning and evening. Thousands of devotees attended the prayers and formed the Sikh Sangat. They listened to the Kirtan of Gurbani and the spiritual discourses of the Guru.



Gurdwara Lakhi Jungle (Bhatinda)

The Guru's words of wisdom and the recitation of Gurbani served as spiritual food to their souls.

Besides prayers, Amrit was daily prepared and hundreds of Sikhs were baptised to join the membership of the Khalsa.

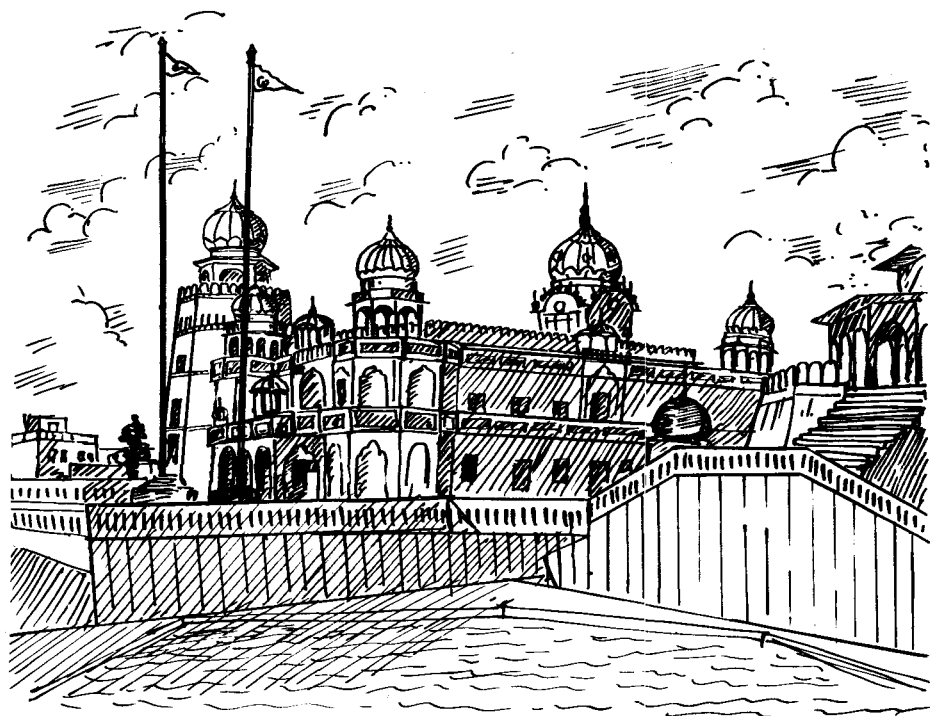
Incidentally Ibrahim, a Muslim fakir had started attending the prayer meetings of the Guru. He was greatly impressed by the teachings of the Guru. The rules of conduct observed by Khalsa too greatly appealed to his mind.

One day after the ending ceremony (Bhog) of Asa Di War, he stood up before the Guru with folded hands and said to him, "Holy sir! I have been treading on the path of devotion for many years, but still the God's bliss was a far cry for me. Your prayers give me such a peace as was never experienced by me. I have come to the conclusion that your path is the only path that will lead me to the salvation and the eternal bliss. I earnestly wish to become a Khalsa by taking the Pahul of Khanda. Do join me into the brotherhood of Khalsa," Ibrahim was then baptised. He was named Ajmer Singh.

There is a long list of Muslim saints, army officers, Chaudharies, Maulvis and others who held the Guru in high esteems. They sacrificed their lives fighting for him, defied the rulers for his sake and from time to time lent their sympathies and extended their help on a number of occasions even at the risk of their lives. But none of them had changed his original Islamic faith. Ibrahim was the first Muslim who took the Amrit of double edged sword and turned a Khalsa.

After his initiation into the Khalsa creed, Ibrahim (Ajmer Singh) ever remained in the company of the Guru.

From the Lakhi Jungle the Guru moved to Talwandi Sabo. For a short period of time it seemed as if the Nwab of Sirhind had suspended the pursuit of the Guru after the battle of Muktsar. At Talwandi the Guru felt as if he had at last found a breathing place. He stopped there for more than a year. As the Guru felt he could rest there without the danger of being troubled by the Nwab, he called Talwandi Damdama Sahib, or



Gurdwara Dam damma Sahib  
(Talwandi Sabo)

a breathing place. Talwandi Sabo is now known as Damdama Sahib and is the fifth religious seat (Takhat) of the Sikh Panth.

Most of the poets, ballads singers, musicians and scholars, who had been scattered because of the Guru's evacuation from Anandpur and the subsequent pillaging of the town by the Mughal soldiers, came back to the Guru at Talwandi Sabo.

They revived their religious as well as scholarly activities at Talwandi by writing poems, saying verses and expressing their philosophical thoughts through their discussions and writings. As all kinds of literary activities were revived on at the soil of Talwandi, the Guru called the place Guru Ki Kanshi (The seat of learning).

The holy volume of Adi Granth was in the possession of the scions of Dhirmal. The Guru sent his Sikhs to bring the volume, so as to incorporate in it the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib. Dhirmalias declined to lend the holy volume. The Guru then dictated to Bhai Mani Singh, the whole Bani of Adi Granth Sahib from out of his memory. Bhai Mani Singh went on writing and thus the new volume was prepared with the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib incorporated in it. It was Guru Gobind Singh Ji who had given the final form to the Adi Granth Sahib. This volume of Granth Sahib is known as "Damdama Sahib Wali Beerh."

In the confusion that prevailed among the Sikh ranks on the banks of Sirsa river, Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan had got separated from the main body and reached Ropar. Thereafter they proceeded to Delhi in the company of Bhai Mani Singh. Two years after that tragic separation, the two ladies came to Talwandi Sabo. With tearful eyes Mata Sundri asked the Guru, "Where are the apples of my eyes, my dear four Jewels (sons). They are not visible to adorn the place with their presence. How is it that I do not find them seated by your sides?" The Guru closed his eyes for a while and then said, "Your sons have become immortal with their martyrdom. Do not think them dead, they are all alive playing in the lap of the "Timeless God." And then in order to relieve the anguish of her mind and provide a consoling solace to her grief stricken

he pointed his hand towards the Sikh Sangat and remarked, "For the well being and safety of these sons, I have sacrificed the lives of my four sons. The loss of four sons do not matter much as I have thousands of sons still alive."

Dalla was the Chaudhary of Talwandi. He had a good number of strong and stoutly built soldiers to obey him. He felt anguished to see Mata Sunderi wailing for her sons. He said to the Guru that he was unaware of the Guru's discomforts and added had he received the information about the atrocious behaviour of the Mughal soldiers against Guru's sons, he would have reached Chamkaur along with his strong and stout soldiers for Guru's support and they could have vanquished the Mughal soldiers and saved the lives of the Guru's sons. Dalla had hardly finished his statement when a Sikh of Lahore entered the Darbar and presented to the Guru a new gun. The Guru was pleased to receive the present. He looked around and then asked Dalla to call his brave and stout soldiers as he wanted to aim the gun shot on one of them. Dalla got nervous to hear the strange command of the Guru. However, he called his soldiers. But none dared stand target for the Guru's shot.

The Guru then asked the Sikhs. Each of them present there volunteered himself to stand in the forefront to become the target for the Guru's aim. The Guru made them stand in a row one after another. He then fired the gun and the bullet crossed over their heads without hitting any one. Dalla was greatly impressed to see the devotion of the Sikhs. The Guru told him how boldly his 40 Sikhs engaged the army of thousands of Mughal soldiers through out the day sending hundreds of them to hell.

The Guru had received another letter from the Emperor. He had summoned the Guru for a meeting. On October 20, 1706 AD the Guru told his Sikhs that he would proceed to the Deccan. Thus the period of his stay at Talwandi came to an end on the said date.



## **29. The Merging of Light in the Light Divine**

The Guru's letter had violently shaken the conscience of the Emperor. His mind was now full of penitence for the wrongs he and his viceroys had done to the Guru. He was then an old man constantly feeling the death knocks tapping the door of his life. Being a religious man at heart, he liked going to the next world with lighter burden of sins going with him. Because of such thinkings of his mind, he had summoned the Guru to meet him at Ahmad Nagar.

The Guru, too, had left Talwandi and was undertaking his journey to the Deccan. Perhaps he intended to meet the Emperor to apprise him of the cruelties shown to the innocent sons of the Guru by the Nawabs of Sirhind. But while the Guru was still camping in Rajasthan enroute to the Deccan, the old Emperor died on February 24, 1707 AD.

With the death of Aurangzeb a war for the throne started among his sons. Prince Azam was staying with his father at Ahmad Nagar. Immediately after the death of the Emperor, he proclaimed that he was the new Emperor. Mauzam, the eldest prince was at Kabul. When the news reached him, he instantly marched off to Agra to occupy the throne for himself. Bahadur Shah (Mauzam) mobilised his sources to fight for the throne. He also requested the Guru to help him. The Guru had his sympathies for him. He sent a detachment of Sikh soldiers under the command of Bhai Dharam Singh. On June 8, 1707 AD a battle was fought between the armies of the two brothers at Jajon. The Sikh soldiers also took part in the fighting in support of Bahadur Shah. Bahadur Shah was victorious and he became the Emperor.

After occupying the throne of the Mughal Empire, Bahadur Shah invited the Guru to Agra. He honourably received the Guru and presented him with a robe of honour and a jewelled scarf (Dukhdukhi) worth sixty thousand rupees.

At Agra the Guru had his encampment in a garden which was at a distance of four miles from the royal palaces. As he felt that the talks with the Emperor regarding taking action against the Nwab of Sirhind were proceeding on smoothly, the Guru sent a mandate to the Sikh Sangat of Dhaul on October 2, 1707 stating that he would soon come back to Punjab and that the Sikhs should fully armed themselves. He assured them that he was confident of achieving his objectives from the Emperor.

The Guru had stayed at Agra for some months when in November 1707 A.D, the Emperor had to march to Rajasthan to quell the rebellion of Kachhwaha Rajputs. The Guru also went there, but he did not fight for the Emperor. The motive of the Guru accompanying the Emperor was to get royal mandate issued against Wazir Khan, the Nwab of Sirhind.

From Rajasthan, the Emperor started his march to the Deccan to crush the rebellion of his brother. He requested the Guru to accompany him. So the Guru also went along with him, but at every halt on the way, he separated himself from the royal camp and would go to preach his mission to the people. This way, many people were converted to adopt the Sikh way of life.

In September 1708 AD, the Mughal army reached Nander. There the Guru finally parted company with the Emperor and proceeded towards the river Godawari. Near the bank of the river, there was a hermitage of an ascetic. It was called the hermitage (Ashram) of Madho Dass Bairagi. Madho Dass was known, as an awful figure, possessing great magical powers. People there believed that he could make the supernatural powers work for him. Hearing a great deal about the ascetic the Guru went to his Ashram. He took his seat on the couch which was exclusively reserved for the Bairagi to sit on. He also told his Sikhs to slaughter one of the monk's goat and cook it for dinner.

For the disciples of the Bairagi, the occupying of the monk's couch and the slaughtering of the goat at the hermitage were the acts amounting to the sacrilege of the place and also such sinful acts as were unbearable for the Bairagi. One of them ran

to the monk to inform him of the outrageous conduct of the Guru and his Sikhs. Madho Dass flew into anger to hear the sacrilege of the Ashram. He rushed to the hermitage to punish the intruders for desecrating the sanctity of the place. **With his occult powers he tried to overturn the couch, occupied by the Guru, but failed. Again he tried the supernatural powers to work for him, but they declined to work against the Guru. Finding that he was helpless against the Guru, he went close to him and asked, "Who are you and why have you come to my Ashram?"**

The Guru replied that he was one whom he knew. Madho Dass thought for a while and then asked if he was Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru nodded in affirmation and said that he had come to make him his disciple. Madho Dass, in total submission, said that he was his Banda (A slave). He surrendered himself entirely at the service of the Guru. In due



Guru Gobind Singh ji giving Banda Singh Bahadur five arrows from his own quiver.

course, he was baptised and was named Gurbaksh Singh, but in Sikh History he is popularly known as Banda Singh Bahadur. The Guru told him all about his sufferings and the aims and ambitions, he cherished for the Khalsa. After a time, he made him the leader of the Sikhs. He gave him his sword and five arrows from his own quiver and sent him to Punjab to avenge the death of the princes on Wazir Khan, the Nwab of Sirhind. He was also to lead the Khalsa in its war against the Mughal despotism.

The Guru had suffered the most at the hands of Wazir Khan, the Nwab of Sirhind. He was the murderer of the innocent young sons of the Guru. He was responsible for most of the pains and sufferings the Guru had to bear. So the constant company of the Guru with the Emperor for such a long time appeared to him a matter of concern. He was alarmed at the news that the Guru's main object in accompanying the Emperor was to get him punished. He feared that the Guru could prevail upon the Emperor to take action against him for the murder of the innocent little children of the Guru. He thought that he should plan to kill the Guru before peace was established between the government and the Sikhs. The elimination of the Guru from the scene, appeared to him essential for his own safety. Consequently he hired two Pathans and entrusted them with the task of killing the Guru. In order to give the conspiracy a practical shape, they secretly followed the Guru on his journey to the Deccan. They were ever on the look of an opportunity to materialise their ill- design. At Nander, they started visiting the Guru's camp off and on. Occasionally they even attended the prayer meetings of the Guru like devotees. This way they had fully acquainted themselves with the daily routine of the Guru. One evening when the Guru had retired to his place for rest after Rehras, (the evening prayer), one of the Pathans named Jamshid entered the Guru's tent. He found the Guru resting on his bed in a state of half asleep. The Pathan saw his chance. Instantly he thrust through his dagger stabbing the Guru in the left side. But before he could repeat the stroke, the Guru with the blow of his sword severed his head off his body. He, then, called out his Sikhs. Many of them

ran to him and were grieved to see him wounded severely. The other Pathan made a bid to flee; but was caught and cut down by the Sikhs.

The Guru's wound was deep and serious. However, it was immediately dressed. When Bahadur Shah heard of the tragic happening, he sent a European surgeon, named Cole for Guru's treatment. He sewed the wound properly and in a few days it appeared to have been healed up.

But the Guru felt that the time for his eternal departure had arrived. He expressed his desire for a big religious assembly of the Sikhs to be held. Thus large number of Sikhs gathered at Nander to form the Sikh congregation.

Under a decorated canopy, the Holy Granth Sahib was placed to adorn the seat. The Guru's face was beaming, and his eyes looked shining with the bliss of Divine love. In the presence of the Sikh Sangat, the Guru lifted a very heavy and stiff bow, presented to him by a Sikh, and bent it with all his might. The result was that the imperfectly healed wound burst open. The Sikhs anxiously desired to dress it, but the Guru, himself wrapped a piece of cloth around it.

He told the Sikh congregation that he had completed his mission on the earth, assigned to him by the Lord and that the Lord had willed his return. He placed five païsas and a coconut before the Holy Granth Sahib. After going round its thrice, he bowed before it. He had already conferred the Guruship on the Holy Granth at Chamkaur Sahib. Now he formally made the Holy Granth as the next Guru of the Sikhs.

Addressing the Sikh congregation he said, " The ten holy souls in human form, in succession, have completed their Divine Mission. Now I have installed the Holy Granth Sahib as the Guru in perpetuity. Thus there will be no future Guru in human form. The holy word of Guru Granth Sahib shall be the guiding light for the Sikh devotees. Whenever you (my Sikhs) find yourself confronted with a situation where you need my guidance, you should gather in the presence of Holy Granth Sahib, discuss and decide matter in the light of the teachings

enshrined in the word of the Holy volume, because I have merged my soul, in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. You will always feel my presence amidst you whenever you remember me with your heart truthful and mind pure; because I have merged my body in the Panth Khalsa. As long as my Khalsa preserves its separate identity, maintains the Khalsa uniform, and sticks to its noble ideals, I shall ever be extending my splendour for its glory."

Thus after merging his soul in the Holy word and his body in the Khalsa Panth, the Tenth lord merged his light in the light Divine. This is how after completing his mission, Guru Gobind Singh, the treasure of virtues, the kings of kings, left this mortal world on october 7, 1708 at the age of 42.

The place where the Holy Guru parted company for Divine union, stands Gurdwara Hazur Sahib Nander (Maharashtra). Hazur Sahib is one of the religious seat (Takhat ) of the Panth Khalsa.